This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Canon Liddon

Henry Parry Liddon, J. S. B.

Digitized by Google

2 Liddon

LIBRARY

OF THE

DIVINITY SCHOOL.

Recd

25 April, 1891.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

O

Henry Parry

CANON LIDDON

A Memoir

WITH THE

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

IN APRIL

(*Reprinted from the "Family Churchman"*)

AND HIS

LAST SERMON

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S, OXFORD

ON WHITSUNDAY.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED AT

"THE FAMILY CHURCHMAN" OFFICE, 8, SALISBURY COURT,

FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

1890.

Digitized by Google

APR 25 1891

Divinity School.

Digitized by Google

THE LATE CANON LIDDON

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Memoir.

MANY besides Churchmen will regret the death of Canon Liddon. He had become so universally recognised as our greatest preacher and theologian, that, although a leading member of the High Church party, he was regarded by all sorts and conditions of Christians as the chief exponent of Christian doctrine. As is already known, he died at Weston-super-Mare, on Tuesday morning, September 9th, at the house of his brother, where he had gone for change of air. He had previously been staying with his sister at Standish Court, Stoneham. But it was deemed advisable to move him to Weston on the Friday before, and, although the journey fatigued him, no symptoms more serious than usual were manifested. Indeed, he was able to take a daily carriage drive, and on the morning of his death partook of breakfast apparently in no worse health than on the previous day. Soon afterwards, however, he was found in a fainting condition, and before medical aid could be procured he had expired. The sad news was conveyed to the Canon in Residence at St. Paul's Cathedral (Canon H. Scott Holland) in a telegram from one of the neices of the great preacher, which ran briefly: "My uncle died suddenly this morning."

Henry Parry Liddon was born at North Stoneham, in Hampshire, and was the eldest son of Captain Matthew Liddon, R.N., who commanded Her Majesty's Ship *The Griper* in the expedition under Sir Edward Parry in search of the North-West Passage. Sir Edward Parry was the boy's godfather, and soon after his birth Captain Liddon moved to Colyton, in Devonshire, and much of H. P. Liddon's youth was spent with an aunt at Taunton. He was born in 1829, and had, therefore, barely completed his sixty-first year at the time of his death. He received his early education at King's College School, and in the year 1847 he was nominated a student of Christ Church. Those who recollect him as an undergraduate speak of him as having been already keenly interested in religion, and as having professed himself a loyal follower of the Tractarian leaders—men whose influence, though it had been momentarily checked by the secession of Newman, was still very considerable. The young student of Christchurch was especially brought in contact with Pusey, and also, away from Oxford, with the

Digitized by Google

gentle personality of one whom he afterwards described as "the best and wisest man whom he had ever known intimately in life"—John Keble. Meantime he read for the schools; but by some accident, though he was a good scholar and a keen logician, he only obtained a Second Class in the examination for his degree (1850). In the next year, however, he obtained a University distinction—the Johnson Theological Scholarship—and he was in due time confirmed in his studentship. He was ordained deacon by Bishop Wilberforce in 1851; and there are still those who remember the keen interest with which, in the intervals of the examination, he discussed theological questions in the garden of Cuddesdon Palace. He was at this time, indeed, studying not only the matter, but the form; and already he had laid to heart the lessons of that great school of ecclesiastical preaching, as distinguished from the popular preaching of Protestantism, which had never died out in France from the days of Massillon and Bourdaloue to the days of Lacordaire. Of the last-named Liddon always professed himself a devoted admirer, but it was rather on the school than on any single member of it that he formed his own well-defined and most impressive style. But his early work as a clergyman did not lie much, or at least exclusively, in the direction of preaching. In 1854 he was appointed Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon College, then recently founded by Bishop Wilberforce as a nursery of young clergy; and it may truly be said that the influence of Liddon during the five years that he held the post had much to do with fixing the character of the college and determining its success.

His principal at Cuddesdon was the Rev. A. Pott, now Archdeacon of Berks; the chaplain of the college was one Edward King, now Bishop of Lincoln. To these three men, undoubtedly, Cuddesdon owes all its fame and more than half of its usefulness. It was at Cuddesdon, however, that Dr. Liddon had his first taste of theological strife. Mr. Golightly, the last of the trenchant Protestant controversialists, returned again and again to the attack upon the college in the *Quarterly*, and again and again was repulsed by the success, as well as by the silence, of his opponents. However, the Bishop was greatly impressed with the strength of Mr. Golightly's position, and, true to his characteristically candid manner, made no attempt to conceal his feelings. Hence the crisis which, after five laborious years, checked the career

Digitized by Google

of Liddon and threatened to transform the character of the seminary. True, the Bishop had reason to waver, even at the last moment. Writing to Mr. Golightly in 1857, Dr. Wilberforce said: "I think my vice-principal eminently endued with the power of leading men to earnest devoted piety; but with such a man I do not think I ought to interfere except as to anything substantially important." In 1858, however, when Mr. Pott resigned the principalship, Mr. Liddon also tendered his resignation of the vice-principalship, and the Bishop accepted it after consultation with Mr. Butler, now Dean of Lincoln, whose curate Mr. Liddon had been at Wantage, and the Bishop based his decision not only on "abstract doctrinal difference as to Holy Communion, but it is as much or more a moral question. I am sure he is entirely honest. In exact proportion to the fulness of my conviction that he is honest, and it is entire, rises the conviction that in this matter he is not, so to speak, trustworthy—that is, that there is in him a strength of will and ardour, a restlessness, a dominant imagination, which makes him unable to give to the young men any tone, even exactly his own tone." The Bishop with regret accepted his resignation, but his friendship with Mr. Liddon never abated. Moreover, Cuddesdon is the same Cuddesdon still.

A very important epoch in Liddon's life was his appointment as examining chaplain to the then Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Walter Ker Hamilton, a man of saintly life, and a pronounced High Churchman. He was one of the three men who most influenced the life and thought of Liddon, the other two being Keble and Pusey. In 1864 Bishop Hamilton appointed Liddon to the prebend of Major Pars Altaris in Salisbury Cathedral. By this time his fame as a preacher was beginning to spread, and when, in 1863, he was for the first time appointed Select Preacher to the University of Oxford, St. Mary's was soon crowded. Already the voice, the manner, and the style were there which have since that date charmed so many scores of thousands of hearers; but at that time all was new except to those who, in some foreign church, had chanced to hear a Dominican brother. The sympathetic tones, the subtle, insinuating argument, the rhetorical artifice, concealed behind extreme simplicity of language; the dogmatic certainty of the preacher's central positions; above all, the fervour of his own personal persuasion, making itself felt through physical exertion that

Digitized by Google

was plainly too severe for him—these things at once made it apparent that a new great preacher had come before the world. Accordingly, when it was announced that Prebendary Liddon was to be the Bampton Lecturer for 1866, the interest of the announcement was felt far beyond the limits of the University. The subject chosen showed the preacher's courage; it was nothing less central, nothing less vast, than "The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The lectures showed no little learning; as printed, with a full apparatus of notes, they show a great deal; but their real strength lay in the skill with which the orthodox case was presented, the weak points in the opponents' case laid bare, and the religious feelings and hopes of Christians appealed to. From the time of the delivery and publication of the Bampton Lectures there was no doubt whatever that, among the more scholarly and controversial preachers of the Church of England, Liddon had taken the leading place.

In the year of the Bampton Lectures, Mr. Liddon was chosen as a member of the Hebdomadal Council at Oxford; and this position he held for three "turns" of three years each, till 1875. He was at the time, as the election implied, resident in Oxford; and his nomination may be said to have signalised the fact that he was regarded, and consented to be regarded, as one of the active leaders of the Church party in the University. He filled in University politics the anomalous position of one who, though a Liberal in the politics of the country, held tenaciously to the old lines, especially on such points as the retention of Greek, and, until 1871, the retention of religious tests. He acted, in fact, with Dr. Pusey, whose lieutenant he really was; and on all such matters as the founding and organisation of the Theological Honour School, he naturally represented the clerical claims in their extreme form. In 1870 he accepted the appointment to Dean Ireland's Professorship of Exegesis, and it need not be said that his lectures, during the twelve years that he held the post, were crowded, not only by candidates for orders, but by others. It can hardly be said that his influence in Oxford, outside the lecture-room, the Council, and the University pulpit, was quite as great as those of some of his contemporaries. Probably his colleague, Dr. King, the present Bishop of Lincoln, had more direct personal influence upon the characters of young High Churchmen.

Digitized by Google

In 1870 Liddon was appointed Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, and about the same time was made D.D. and Hon. D.C.L. The partial removal to London which the canonry implied brought his person, his voice, and his work before the notice of thousands of those to whom he had till then been a mere name. His first systematic appearance in London, however, was not at St. Paul's, but as Lent Lecturer at St. James's, Piccadilly, where he delivered to thronged congregations the sermons which have since become so generally known under the title of *Some Elements of Religion*. These, and, still more, the sermons preached during his annual residence at St. Paul's, differed in many respects from the sermons preached at Oxford. Like a true orator, Dr. Liddon had a ready perception of the character of his audience. At Oxford he was didactic, dialectical, even learned on occasion. In London, though the religious basis was the same, his aim was to be above all things simple, clear, and consistent. Canon Gregory, with the support of Dean Mansel, had already introduced a great many beneficial changes in the services of St. Paul's when Liddon came into residence, but much remained to be accomplished, and upon this task he set his heart. Almost his first sermon in the cathedral revealed his mettle, when he denounced the ordinary cathedral congregation as "mainly sightseers—practically heathen." From the first he began to take a personal interest in the staff of the cathedral, urging and helping them to become thorough Churchmen in deed as well as in word. In its effect this policy secured for the services of London's great cathedral a respect which is hardly shared by any other cathedral or collegiate church in the country. Sunday afternoon at St. Paul's, with Liddon in residence, re-peopled the City on the day of rest. All ranks and conditions of men flocked to him—Roman Catholics and Nonconformists quite as readily as Churchmen. Visitors to London, especially Americans, felt that such an experience was indispensable to their programme of sightseeing. And with what wonderful command of vast congregations the eloquent preacher disposed of his voice, his argument, and his oratorical manner only one—but not less than one—such experience could prove. It has been said by an experienced observer that Dr. Liddon at St. Paul's offered an almost unique example of a preacher who habitually held the close attention of a

Digitized by Google

middle-class audience for an hour at a time, by sermons each of which was a consecutive argument. The argument may not have been complicated; the premisses were generally familiar; but to follow the discourse at all implied steady attention, and this the vast audience beneath the dome were always ready to give. It must, however, be admitted that the necessity of preaching to congregations so large and so mixed had an injurious effect on Dr. Liddon's style. The physical exertion was more than he could stand; the necessity of repeating old arguments, the absence of criticism, and the various other conditions of the case tended to lower the extraordinarily high level to which he had attained at Oxford and in Piccadilly. But what man of any generation could continue to preach freshly and without loss of power to congregations like those for twenty years?

In two ways Dr. Liddon took an active part in the public affairs of his time. He was, as we have said, a Liberal in general politics, or it would be more correct to say that he was a follower of Mr. Gladstone in most of the courses which that statesman has pursued. Especially did he follow, or perhaps help to lead, Mr. Gladstone in the anti-Turkish campaign of 1876-8. Dr. Liddon, as a High Anglican, was full of sympathy for the Greek Christians, and espoused their cause against the Turks with all the energy of which he was capable. He visited Servia and the neighbouring countries, and the controversy is still remembered which he and Canon MacColl kept up in the columns of the *Times* against many opponents as to the impalement of a Christian by Turks, of which they declared themselves to have been eye-witnesses. Some years before this Dr. Liddon had shown equally strong sympathy with another body of persecuted Christians, the Old Catholics, of whose Congress at Bonn, in 1875 (and in 1874 as well), he drew up, or edited, an interesting report. But these instances of his intervention in public affairs were less important than his frequent interventions when the interests of the Church of England were, as he thought, directly attacked, as by the Church Discipline Act of 1874, by the Purchas judgment, and other examples of what, in the title of a little volume, he called *Troubles of the Church*. He entirely disliked, denounced, and repudiated the supreme authority of the Judicial Committee.

For several years past Dr. Liddon has been engaged upon

Digitized by Google

what he hoped and believed would prove the great work of his life, the biography of his friend and master, Dr. Pusey. "It was to this constant engagement, as much as to any other cause," says the *Times*, "that we must attribute his refusal of all Church preferment." But the *Life* has not been concluded, and it is not known in what state it has been left. It may, however, be assumed that Dr. Liddon, a most methodical worker, and one endowed with the valuable gift of a good handwriting, has left his papers in order, ready to be taken up by some faithful successor. It should be added that Dr. Liddon was largely instrumental in founding the two institutions at Oxford which are named after Keble and Pusey; and to the end he was equally interested in the college and the House. But of the remarkable literary outcome of the Pusey House which this year has seen—the book called *Lux Mundi*—he did not approve; he thought it too great a concession to modern criticism; and he viewed its publication and success with no little pain. Like Plato and Luther, he found himself, before his death, outrun by his pupils.

A personal friend and fellow-worker of the Canon's has kindly given a glimpse of him as he was seen by those who were on intimate terms with him. He says: "In his early days his preaching was much more extempore than in later years. He had a great deal more vehemence and action, and depended less upon his manuscript. He came, however, gradually to write more and more, although he had all the special gifts of a speaker, his speeches being at least as striking as his sermons. He had the power of becoming the more epigrammatic the more impassioned he was. I remember one speech in particular, which he delivered at Cuddesdon, when Bishop King left for Oxford to become professor. Liddon was very anxious about the issue, and he made a speech full of humour, sarcasm, and brilliancy. Another occasion was the jubilee of the Union at Oxford, when Lord Salisbury, Lord Coleridge, Lord Selborne, and all the great people were there. He proposed 'Literature,' and Mr. Matthew Arnold returned thanks. Other speakers were prosing away, and we waited till midnight to hear the speech, and it proved an extraordinarily brilliant effort. Matthew Arnold felt it so much that he altogether gave up the idea of making a reply. He was keen and incisive in his language, and possessed a wonderful power of irony and humour, which

Digitized by Google

showed itself more in his talk than in his sermons. In the latter the sarcasm and humour were very carefully subdued, but they were there all the same. He would never talk about his own sermons; hardly ever referred to them. He regarded them with great humility, and had a special dislike to any praise being bestowed upon them. He was quite conscious of the limitations that a sermon has. He would say himself that it was only a net to catch souls, the means of getting nearer to men; and he had a strong belief in the work to be done behind preaching. He had a good deal of personal contact with his hearers, and a great mass of confidential letter-writing with people on spiritual subjects. Many never missed his sermons when he preached in the Cathedral.

"One of his finest gifts was that of exposition. The deep influence he won over Oxford was largely due to his wonderful teaching power. His lectures in Queen's Hall, which drew together the undergraduates on Sunday evenings, were mostly New Testament expositions. Since he resigned his professorship he revived them in Christ Church Hall, and they were a great joy to him. He would speak for an hour, and then collect the young men round him and talk at any length on any subject on which they might draw him.

"The Canon was a brilliant story teller, one of the very best I have ever known. Indeed, he had a special gift in that direction, and would dramatize in a most effective way. He was extremely sensitive to his company, and if there was one present with whom he was out of sympathy he would be restrained directly, and people who met him thus might think him restrained, and even formal; but among his intimate friends he would bubble over. He was sarcastic, but most of all humorous. His humour was a most refreshing, sparkling, surprising thing. It flowed freely, especially in the evenings. If he could not sleep, and got you out in the 'quad.' at Christ Church, he would ramble about till midnight pouring out his talk. He had an exceedingly keen sense of comic situations and a happy knack of coining epithets that made you jump with laughter. This humour so flooded his talk that you could not imagine how he kept it out of his sermons to the extent he did."

J. S. B.

Digitized by Google

THE BEARING OF THE RESURRECTION ON THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD.

(*Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, the 6th April, being Easter Day, 1890.*)

ROMANS I. 3, 4.

"Who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead."

A GREAT festival of the Christian Church like Easter appears to have one drawback attending it from which days of less importance are comparatively free. It offers so much to think about that, unless we try to make some one of the lessons which it teaches our own, it may pass us by without leaving us any the wiser or better for taking part in it. The rays of truth which flash forth from a fact like the Resurrection of our Lord are so many and so bright that if we do not fix our minds upon some one of them, and do what we may to understand its importance, we may only be dazzled into bewilderment by the splendid whole, and may carry away with us nothing that afterwards will shape our thoughts or influence our lives.

And here St. Paul comes to our assistance by suggesting at the beginning of his greatest Epistle a point which may well engage attention, namely: the bearing of the Resurrection on the Divinity of our Lord. Leaving other things, the Resurrection, he tells us, did this: it threw a special light on the highest nature of Jesus Christ,—"He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the Resurrection from the dead."

Now, let us note for a moment that in the passage before us St. Paul summarily describes the contents of the Gospel, and says it was wholly concerned with our Lord Jesus Christ, and with two facts about Him more especially. The first fact—that He was really man, with a human body and a

Digitized by Google

human soul. This was clear from His being a member of a particular and well-known Jewish family. "According to the flesh"—that is, in respect of His human nature—He was born of the seed of David. The second fact—that, although man, He was more than man. "According to the spirit of holiness"—that is, in respect of His higher and superhuman nature—"He was declared to be the Son of God." The phrase "according to the spirit of holiness," in the second clause, corresponds to and contrasts with the phrase "according to the flesh" in the first clause; and, as the flesh in this passage certainly means human nature, and not, as often, the corrupt or animalised principle of human nature, so "the spirit of holiness" means, not the Third Person in the Godhead, "Who sanctifies us," but the higher or Divine nature of Christ, somewhat vaguely described, and set over against His human nature. For this less common use of the word "spirit" we have a warrant in two other passages of the New Testament at least, and the resulting sense is that, as our Lord was seen to be truly man by the fact of His birth n the family of David, so the true import and character of His higher nature became apparent when He rose from the dead.

Here, then, is opened to us a subject of the highest interest on this the greatest of Christian festivals, when the Church throughout the world stands around the empty sepulchre proclaiming that Christ is risen from the dead. For here we are taught by the Apostle to think of that Resurrection not only as the reversal of the humiliation and defeat which had preceded it, not only as the certificate of the mission of the greatest Teacher of religion to mankind, but as something more—as a declaration, or, more precisely, a definition, of what in respect of His superhuman nature Christ our Lord really was and is. The Resurrection was not only a wonder, it was an instruction, it was a means of making it plain to all who had spiritual eyes to see that He Who rose was much more than the first of Prophets and Apostles, that He was not less than the only-begotten Son of God, Who had shared God's throne and His nature from all eternity.

That which the Apostle's words may, first of all, suggest to us is the importance of events. He attributes, you observe, to a single event the power of setting forth a great truth, just as though the event were a speaker or a book.

Digitized by Google

"Christ," he says, "was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection from the dead." Undoubtedly, brethren, events are for God what language is for man; they are the means whereby God reveals His mind and will. Events are the language of God written on the pages of human history, whether it be the history of a man, or of a family, or of a nation, or of the world. Just as God's eternal power and Godhead are, according to the Apostle, clearly understood by a reverent study of the book of nature—"the things that are made," as he calls it—so the judgments which are formed in the Divine mind on men, on families, on nations, are discoverable in the book of human history, since they are written in that language of events. This of course must appear an unreasonable statement to those who imagine that all that happens to mankind—birth and death, sickness and health, good and bad seasons, national prosperity and national decline—are the result of bad forces, existing—why we know not, wherefore we know not, but which have, it seems, somehow given us existence, only that, like the sea-weed that is tossed this way or that on the surf of the waves, we may illustrate their relentless power, and our own abject helplessness.

But it will not appear unreasonable to any man who sincerely believes in a living God, in a God Whose rules of working are not His masters, nor yet powers which, after owing to Him their being, have somehow escaped from His control, but only the free manifestation of Himself, of that order which is the rule of His life, Who Himself is everywhere present, everywhere and incessantly intelligent and at work, so that by Him "the hairs of our head are all numbered," and without Him "not a sparrow falls to the ground." To believe in a living God is to believe that events which He brings about or permits are a declaration of His mind; but then, whether the characters in which the mind is thus declared are always legible by man, or by all men, is quite another question. Sometimes, indeed, they are written in a familiar alphabet, their meaning is so clear that all men may read it.

All who believe that the world is governed by a moral God understand what was meant by the fall of Babylon, by the capture of Rome by Alaric, by the close of the career of Napoleon. Sometimes they are written in characters as wholly

Digitized by Google

unintelligible to all living men as were the Egyptian hieroglyphics half a century ago, though they may be read by the higher intelligences around the throne of Heaven, or they may be read hereafter on earth, for all that we know, by highly-endowed souls. And in the Book of History there is much writing of this kind which eludes the efforts of man's inquisitive and constant gaze. But sometimes also the meaning of God's writing in events is hidden from the mass of men at first sight, but becomes plain to them when the key of its interpretation has been given them by some competent instructor, like the "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin" traced on the wall of the banqueting chamber of the eastern monarch, the sense of which was plain when a Daniel had been summoned to decipher it. Of such handwriting as this, too, history is full; but we must not linger on it, since we have to fix our attention on one great sample, or one particular event,—the Resurrection of our Lord.

Now, that a strictly supernatural occurrence, such as the Resurrection of our Lord, would have a special meaning or several meanings is surely an obvious supposition. The strange thing would be if such an event should occur without any purpose or meaning at all; and St. Paul tells us what, in his inspired judgment, one such meaning was: it was to declare that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

Endeavour, my brethren, to think what sort of impression would be created in your minds if, after following to the grave one whom you had dearly loved for many years, after listening to the last office of the Church, and watching the sod as it was thrown in upon the coffin, you should see that same friend or relative enter your room with the old look, the well-known figure and expression, the accustomed voice, remaining just long enough to assure you that he was here again, and then passing swiftly away to comfort and encourage some other mourner. And yet this is in substance what did happen to Mary Magdalene, to the holy women, to Peter, to James, to the two disciples, to the ten on the day of our Lord's rising from the dead. Such events could not but be of great significance, even if the risen one should not utter a word. The very appearance of such a visitor would be pregnant with meaning, it would declare a good deal that at first we should find it hard to put in words about the unseen world and this, about life and death, about the ways of God, about the destiny

Digitized by Google

of man. You will allow this and much more. "But why," you may ask, "why should our Lord's Resurrection have the higher and particular effect of declaring Him to be the Son of God?" Others, you may well urge, had visited the realms of death and had returned to life, who were not declared by this awful experience to be the Divine Son. We need not travel beyond the records of the Gospel history in order to meet with the widow's son at Nain, and with Lazarus at Bethany. Certainly in these cases resurrection to life was a signal token of the Divine favour, but it left them as it found them, members of the human family, still subject to the law of death.

What was it in our Lord's case which invested His Resurrection with this declaratory force which the Apostle ascribes to it? Now, the answer is first of all that the Resurrection of our Lord was a verification of the proof which He had voluntarily offered of His own claim. The Jewish doctors had understood the words of the Psalm addressed to the Messiah, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," not only of His birth beforetime, as it is understood in the Epistle to the Hebrews, but also of His rising from the dead. And in this sense it is employed by St. Paul in that wonderful appeal to the Jewish conscience which he made in the Synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, the Scripture bearing its own witness to the depth below depth of meaning which lies in its very simplest word. And therefore our Lord, knowing what was involved in the claim to be Messiah, foretold His Resurrection certainly on six, probably on more, occasions, and it was in this fulfilment of His own prediction, a prediction based on the deeper sense of the ancient Scriptures, that St. Paul recognised a declaration of the Divine Sonship of Christ.

The Resurrection was an intervention of the Almighty Father on behalf of His well-beloved Son, it was an assertion by the Son of His real relation with the Father, it was a proof that the certainties of the future and the laws of the physical world were alike subject to His supreme control. It was an event in the manner of its accomplishment so altogether exceptional and striking that the Apostle's appeal to it as declaratory of our Lord's Divinity is—if the expression might be allowed—only natural. Our Lord Himself had summoned the widow's son to rise from the bier, he had summoned

Digitized by Google

Lazarus to issue from the recesses of the tomb, but no form of majesty or power stood by His grave, no voice of authority was heard to speak. When before the dawn His human soul, returning from the regions of the dead, reunited itself with the holy body that lay in the sepulchre, and passed forth into the world of living men, it was a declaration that He Who had died and was buried was the Son of God.

But further, in our Lord's case, the Resurrection did not stand alone. It is abstractly conceivable that the foolish or the bad might be raised from the dead by superhuman power; one day we Christians know they will be in order "to give account of the things done in the body." In our Lord's case Resurrection from the dead was combined with absolute holiness and wisdom, with words "such as never man spake," with a life which none who had witnessed it could convict of sin,—in short, with a manifestation of truth and goodness which had never before been offered to the human conscience. The Resurrection was the fitting complement to the life and teaching of our Lord. It confirmed the anticipations which that life and teaching naturally raised; it was the countersign in the sphere of physical being of a judgment which had already been formed in the sphere of instructed conscience. Had our Lord lived and died, and then rotted in His grave, then His life would have died away in time from the memories of men; had He risen—it is an impossible supposition—without having lived His life, His Resurrection would have been merely a blank wonder, appealing only to the imagination and saying nothing to the sense of right and truth. As it is, it proclaims to all the world what disciples like Peter at Cæsarea Philippi had owned before at their Master's feet, it proclaims that He Who was crucified, dead and buried, is the Son of God, declared to be such by His Resurrection from the dead.

But the Apostle says that the declaration of the Divine Sonship of Christ which was made by the Resurrection was made "with power." The Resurrection did not hesitatingly suggest that our Lord might possibly be the Son of God; it amounted, when taken together with His life and character and teaching, to a demonstration irresistible and overwhelming—at least for the Apostle himself—that He was the Son of God. I say, "for the Apostle himself," because, looking at the connection of the passage, it is scarcely open to doubt

Digitized by Google

that the expression "with power" points first of all to a personal experience.

Saul of Tarsus, at that time an active young rabbi in Jerusalem, strongly attached to the cause of the Pharisee party, was not one of the privileged company to whom our risen Redeemer showed Himself during the great forty days. As an unconverted Jew he would have looked at the person and work of Jesus through an atmosphere discoloured by false reports and by implacable controversial passion. For Saul, the rabbi, Jesus was only a teacher who had learned the trick of winning access to the popular ear, and had established for himself in the minds of the uneducated many the character and the authority of a prophet, a teacher moreover whose influence was steadily directed against that of the representatives of the established order of things in Jerusalem, and who had only met with his deserts when he was put to a cruel death by the Roman authorities. The tragedy of Calvary, he would have said at the time, would be a nine days' wonder, and then other persons and subjects of interest would come to the front and all would be forgotten.

Nor would this judgment be disturbed by the rumours which may have reached Saul's ears that there had been one or more apparitions of Jesus after His death. Saul's robust scepticism would have whispered to itself that rumours of this sort were only to be expected among the credulous and disappointed followers whom Jesus had misled, and that they were not deserving of serious consideration. And so he would have gone on his way in his bitter sincerity, even going so far as to place himself at the disposal of the persecuting party—not his own—which filled the highest places in the Jewish priesthood, and to take a foremost part in the cruelties by which it was hoped to stamp out the very name of the infant Church. And then came the journey to Damascus, and that scene among the low hills of the desert some eight miles from the city gate, which was to change the foremost persecutor of Christ into the most devoted of His Apostles. And what was it that that scene brought home with irresistible power to the mind of Saul of Tarsus? Many truths, no doubt, but this pre-eminently, that Jesus, of Whom he had dreamed as stricken and silenced for ever in the stillness and corruption of the tomb, was alive, and ruling men and events from the clouds of heaven. And how and

Digitized by Google

since what date this had come to be, Saul would have learned from Ananias of Damascus, and still more when he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and had cross-questioned first this Apostle and then that, James and Thomas, and the penitent and radiant Magdalene, and the two disciples who walked to Emmaus, and as many as he would while passing through Galilee of those five hundred who had seen the Lord on one single occasion.

Of the great fact there was evidence enough and to spare, if only there was a mind open to receive it, and when the fact that Jesus Who was crucified had thus risen from the dead was established in the mind of Paul as a certainty beyond all discussion, how inevitably would it have changed the whole way of looking at all else about Jesus. It was then Jesus, and not himself or his instructors, Who held the true key to those ancient Scriptures; it was the teaching of Jesus, and not that of the Rabbinical schools, which followed on in a direct line from Moses and the prophets. Those miracles of Jesus at which, with other Pharisees, he had so often scoffed were only what might be expected in the air of Messianic prophecies, and this crowning wonder of all, which Jesus had predicted as designed to follow on His death, lifted yet further and more completely the veil that hung before the eyes of the astonished and humbled rabbi, and showed that He Who could thus make the past and present alike minister to His glory, He Who could rule at once all the generations of man, and mould at pleasure the forces of nature, He Who could lie as a corpse in the darkness of the grave, and then, speaking from the heavens, could bend into utter submission the mind and the will of His stoutest adversary, must be indeed of more than human stature, must be indeed Divine.

To St. Paul the Resurrection was a revelation of the Divinity of the Son of God, made "with power." If to St. Paul, much more, we may well think, to those who saw the risen Redeemer once and again,—saw Him, conversed with Him, ate with Him, touched Him. Such certainly was the effect on that Apostle who was, it might seem, naturally of a sceptical turn of mind, although, as our Collect says, "for the more confirmation of the faith," he was doubtful of Christ's Resurrection. What was Thomas's exclamation when our Lord offered His hands and His side to the

Digitized by Google

inquisitive touch of the Apostle? "My Lord and my God!" Those sacred wounds in the risen body were a revelation, not of Christ's manhood only, but of His power; they proclaimed the power that had conquered death.

And so it has been ever since. The Resurrection has been felt to be the fact which beyond all others proclaims Christ as the Son of God. When Judas had gone his way, the important requisite in his successor was that he was to be a witness to the Resurrection. The Resurrection was the burden of all the recorded preaching of the earliest Church. The Gospel it preached was a Gospel of Resurrection—whether in the mouth of Stephen or of St. Paul, it was all the same. And at this moment all who think seriously on the matter know that the Resurrection is the point at which the creed which rises to the height of heaven is most securely embedded in the soil of earth, most thoroughly capable of asserting a place for its Divine and living Subject in the history of our race. Disprove the Resurrection and Christianity fades away into thin air as a graceful but discredited illusion, but while it lasts as a certain fact it does its work as at the first in every honest conscience and intellect. More than any other event it proclaims Christ to be the Son of God, with power, in millions of souls. It is said, I know, that a wonder of this kind, however calculated to impress the mind of bygone generations, is not likely to weigh with our own, and on the ground that we men of to-day are less struck by suspensions of natural law than by the unvarying order of nature.

Every age, no doubt, has its fashions in the world of thought and literature, no less than in the world of manners and of dress, and if we survey a sufficient range of time we shall see that these fashions of thought, or many of them, are not less liable to have their day, and to be discarded, than the other fashions. Nor need a man be a prophet in order to predict that the fashion which professes to attach less importance to a proved fact which involves a suspension of natural law, whether by the intervention of a higher law or otherwise, than to the general course and regularity of nature, is a fashion that will not last. Of course, when a man says that no such suspension of natural law, no miracle, is possible, the question is different, and in a sense it is a more important one; but I am for the moment thinking of people

Digitized by Google

who say that they deny neither the possibility nor the occurrence of miracle, and yet point with some sort of satisfaction to the fashionable temper of the time which does not think highly of the importance of miracle. And such a fashion, I say, will pass, if only because it is out of harmony with the average common-sense of human nature.

When does a fellow-man attract our attention? Is it when he is acting as he is wont, or when he is acting in some way which we did not anticipate, excelling himself, as we say, or falling below himself—a good man, as we thought, letting his mouth speak wickedness, or being partaker with the adulterers, or a bad man, as we held him, rising to a sort of generosity and self-sacrifice; the wise man committing himself, for the moment, to some startling folly, or the foolish man uttering some opinion the value of which commands the respect of the wise? And when the Ruler of the Universe suspends, for the moment, His wonted rules of working by such a miracle as raising the dead, the importance of His act will not be disposed of by a passing mood of thought which, fresh from laboratories and observatories, thinks more of law than of suspensions of law. No; our Lord's Resurrection is an occurrence which will declare to our children, as it has declared to our forefathers, the Divine Sonship of Jesus; and it will do this, as it has done it hitherto, "with power."

We know what death is. We have known, most of us, at some moment of our lives, what we would have given to be able to break its chain; and in the misery of this experience we may own the true Lordship of Him Who liveth, and was dead, and behold He is alive again for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death.

And, lastly, there is another sense in which the Resurrection from the dead is a declaration that Jesus is the Son of God. No one can read the Epistles of St. Paul without observing that he constantly speaks of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, not only as events in the life of Jesus on earth, but as spiritual transactions which took place within the Christian soul or character. He bids Christians crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. He says of himself, "I am crucified with Christ." Addressing his readers at Ephesus, he quotes a Christian Jew of the earliest age. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give

Digitized by Google

thee light." He exclaims in this day's Epistle to his Colossian friends, "If we then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above." It is true that this language of St Paul is more particularly connected with the entrance of new converts into the Church of Christ by baptism. Conversion had involved a crucifixion of the old corrupt nature, and then as the new convert was dipped beneath the baptismal waters and raised again by the minister of the sacrament, he was, in St. Paul's words, "buried with Christ in baptism, and raised again to newness of life."

But, although that is the first and the more usual application of the passages, his language also applies to the circumstances of the later life of baptized Christians who have fallen from God, from grace, and have to return to God by a fresh conversion. If the body of Christ could only rise once from the grave, the Christian soul may certainly need to rise a second time; may, after a fall from grace, need such a resurrection, unless all is to be lost. And when such an event in the moral or spiritual world takes place, think you that they who look on do not learn something that they had not known before about the Son of God? Is it nothing that a Saul of Tarsus should lie in the grave of sin, and then, touched by a mighty inspiring force, bidding him rise and live, should pass forth to a new life of freedom and purity?

So it has been, sometimes in youth, sometimes in middle life, sometimes in declining years, almost within sight of death, with men of the most opposite characters, in the most various positions, whose experiences of sin and of its misery have been as unlike as possible. So it was in one age with Augustine, at once a man of cultivation and a libertine, whom one verse of an Epistle of St. Paul's made a saint and teacher of the Church; so it was with the profligate Earl of Rochester in the days of the Restoration; so, in our own, to take instances only from another land, with the popular French atheist who a few years ago devoted his whole time to propagating blasphemies against the character of the Redeemer; so with Littré, the polished man of letters, from whose mental atmosphere, almost until the last hour had come, God was utterly shut out by a false philosophy. For each of these, the profligate philosopher, the debauched courtier, the atheistic lecturer, the refined but Godless man of letters, God had His purpose and His hour of mercy.

Digitized by Google

You may some of you have known men the bearers of less famous names than these, or living in private life, who have been subjects too of a spiritual resurrection. We may see dead souls joined to bodies of activity and vigour, to minds of intelligence and force, but not on that account the less dead. Such a soul lies in the grave of sin, it is blind, deaf, dumb, motionless, cold, putrid. It sees not the works of God in providence and life, His mercies, His judgments. It hears not the warnings of God in His Word, in His Church, in Hs inward appeals to conscience. It speaks not to God in prayer; it has not the clear-sightedness nor the heart to pray. It clothes not one single power or faculty in the robe of obedience. It is cold, so cold as to strike into any that touch it a deadly chill, aye, and, like Lazarus, it has already passed into the stage of moral putrefaction, so long has it lain in the grave.

And when such a soul hears the voice of the Son of God, when its eyes are opened to behold His justice and His love, when it opens its ears to listen to His warnings and His promises, when it opens its mouth to pray and to praise Him as the Author, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier of its life, when such a soul exchanges its corruption for purity, its coldness for the glow of a warm faith, bursts the bandages of habit which are wrapped around it in its grave, and passes forth, from the barriers that would fain detain it, into light and freedom—when men around behold this, and note further how in such a soul, risen and beautified, love has taken the place of hatred, and joy of sullen discontent, and peace of the restlessness of a bad conscience, and long-suffering of impatience with others and with God that knew no bounds, and gentleness and meekness of self-assertion, and faith of a distrust alike of man and God, and temperance of a perfect chaos of insurgent passions—when they see the man who dwelt yesterday among the graves sitting to-day amid the pure, clothed and in his right mind, and ask who has done it, who has thus changed that which offers to His will a much more stubborn resistance than the dust of a buried corpse, or the stone which closes the mouth of the sepulchre, it is clear what must be the answer. Who but He Who at the grave at Bethany announced Himself as "the Resurrection and the Life," bade Lazarus come forth from his tomb, and Whose own Resurrection is not merely an outward fact to mould our

Digitized by Google

thoughts, but an inward power to transform our very wills and characters.

When the old Christians, whom Saul of Tarsus had so cruelly wronged, beheld his converted life, his clear intelligence, his warm affections, his free and strong will, all placed at the service of the Saviour, Whom he but now had persecuted, what did they do? He himself shall answer: "They glorified God in me." And when in the Church of our day a soul rises from the death of sin to the life of righteousness there goes forth—oh! be sure of it—into hundreds and thousands of consciences around a proclamation of the Divine power of the Son of God.

God grant that this Easter the heart of the risen and glorified Jesus may be gladdened by many such a moral resurrection, and that we who witness, or who through His grace experience it, may know more and more surely to our endless peace Who He is and what He can do.

Digitized by Google

THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD.

(Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, the 13th April, being the first Sunday after Easter, 1890.)

1 JOHN. v. 4.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

AT Eastertide ideas of triumph are in the air. The victory of our Lord over death gives the keynote; and many other victories of a less splendid character group themselves round this central triumph. Some of them preceded it, as notably the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian bondage: "Sing ye to the Lord," sang Miriam, "for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea," Some of them followed it, as when the Apostles, hitherto so lacking in clear conviction and in settled resolution, found themselves at Pentecost endued with power from on high, and took the first steps in their mighty task, the conversion of all nations to the faith of Christ. And thus it is in keeping with the suggestions of the season, that the appointed Epistle for to-day brings before us a particular victory, which it is most important that every Christian should, in some way or other, at some time or other, or, most probably, again and again, win—namely, victory over the world. "This," exclaims St. John, "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

There is one particular reason for winning this victory which will have weight with all of us who have been baptized into the Church of Christ.

We, at any rate, my baptized brethren, we have promised to win it. Before we were baptized we engaged, through those who represented us at the font, to renounce the world, no less than the flesh and the devil; and this renunciation must surely have meant a moral victory. "Dost thou," said the minister, to each of those who represented us at the font,

Digitized by Google

"Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them?" And the answer was: "I renounce them all." Clearly it was a very serious engagement, made as a condition of our being baptized into Christ, and we are, therefore, concerned to ask what it is that we have thus undertaken to renounce and conquer—in other words, what exactly we mean by "the world."

And here, first of all, it is obvious that, both in the Bible and in our common language, the word "world" is used in more senses than one. It is used sometimes of the universe or the planet in which we live. Thus the Psalmist speaks of God's existing everlastingly "or ever the earth and the world were made," and of God's having made the round world so fast that it cannot be moved. And Jeremiah says that God "established the world by His wisdom." And St. Paul preaches to the Athenians of God that "made the world and all things therein." And St. John says, in a hyperbolical way, that if all our Lord's acts were to be fully recorded, he supposes that "even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." And St. Peter, speaking of the Flood, says that the world that then was, "being overflowed with water, perished."

Thus the world of nature in which God has placed us as our home during this stage of our existence is clearly not an object of renunciation or conquest. It has no moral colouring attached to it. Its main service to us, after affording us a resting place and satisfying our wants, is to disclose, when we carefully examine it, something of the nature and the attributes of the great and wonderful Being Who made it. And again, "the world" is sometimes used in Holy Scripture of the aggregate, or at any rate of a large number of human beings, viewed simply as human beings, and without any sort of reflection on their moral condition, or on their bent of character. In this sense we are told that "a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus that all the world"—that is all the inhabitants of the Roman empire—"should be taxed." And the Apostles are described by the Jews of Thessalonica as men "who have turned the world upside down." And, in a more restricted sense, the Pharisees observed after the

Digitized by Google

raising of Lazarus "that the world"—meaning thereby the population of Jerusalem and of the immediate neighbourhood—"had gone after Jesus Christ"; while, in a much wider sense than that even of the Roman Empire, God is said to have "so loved the world"—meaning the family of man—as to have given "His only-begotten Son" for it. And in this sense we sometimes speak quite rightly of "the judgment of the world"—meaning that of all men, or of the wisest of men—as having about it a security and a weight which cannot be ignored. And clearly this is not the world which is conquered or renounced by a good Christian. He is, on the contrary, under special obligations to do what he can to serve his fellow-men by promoting their temporal and eternal interests.

There is, however, a third use of the word in Scripture which is more common than either of the two preceding uses, and which are especially observable in the writings of St. John. In this sense the world means human life, and the temper, the views, the conduct, which mark it so far as it is estranged from God. And thus our Lord says to His followers: "If the world hate you ye know that it hated Me before it hated you"; and to the Jews, "The world cannot hate you, but Me it hateth"; and again to His disciples: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

In this sense He promises the Spirit of Truth, "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." In this sense He says: "My peace I give to you; not as the world giveth give I unto you," and predicts: "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice"; and declares to the Father: "I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be Thine;" and bids His disciples: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And St. John's First Epistle, which reproduces in another form that element of our Lord's teaching which the writer was especially careful to report in his Gospel, is full of warnings and instructions respecting the world in the sense of human life alienated from God. "The world," he writes, "knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." The false teachers of his day, he says, "are of the world, therefore speak they of the world." "Love not the

Digitized by Google

world," he exclaims, "neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"; and "the world passeth away and the lust thereof." And so in the text: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Nor is this way of employing the word "world" by any means confined to the writings of St. John. St. Paul writes to the Galatians "of this present evil world"; to the Corinthians of "the God of this world, who hath blinded the minds of them that believe not"; to the Ephesians, "of the rulers of the darkness of this world; to the Romans a warning against being "conformed" to this world"; to Timothy about Demas who had forsaken him, "having loved this present world." And St. Peter speaks bluntly of "the corruption that is in the world through lust"; and of Christians, as having "escaped the pollutions of the world." And St. James says that a man's keeping himself "unspotted from the world" is a note of true religion; and he writes of a "friendship with the world" which means enmity with God.

Now from these passages we gather that the world in the sense thus condemned by Holy Scripture is marked by two distinguishing characteristics. In the first place it is the temper of mind which exaggerates the claims of the present and of the visible, and which, to say the least, throws into the background the claims of the future and the unseen. It makes the most of the seen; it plays off the seen against the unseen. "What we see," it whispers to us, "what we see is here, it is within our grasp; the unseen is distant, it is a matter of speculation." And as God is out of sight, the world keeps Him, so far as it can, out of mind, too, if only by its importunate insistence upon the claims of what we see; and as the future is no less out of sight than God, the world keeps it, too, out of mind by reiterating the praise of what is present. By the future I mean of course that more remote and solemn future which follows upon death; the nearer future undoubtedly the world will do its best to command and make the most of. And secondly, the temper of the world means the appropriation, or rather the monopoly, of desire by present and visible objects.

Whether it be the lower or higher forms of desire, the world-temper provides for each its special satisfaction, and

Digitized by Google

encourages it to look for that satisfaction as the supreme good. Sometimes the satisfaction is addressed to ambition, sometimes to the passion for amusement, sometimes to the promptings of curiosity, sometimes to personal vanity, sometimes to mere acquisitiveness, sometimes to the sensual instincts. But in all these cases it has the result that, by providing a false object for desire, it shuts out the true object, namely, God. Desire, as you know, my brethren, was meant to keep the human soul, just as the law of attraction keeps the planets, moving regularly round its true centre, God. And when some other object comes near enough to drag a soul from this, which is its true moral orbit, the result is moral ruin. As St. John says, "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father"—that is its condemnation—"but is of the world."

And here, perhaps, somebody is saying to himself: "Well, what is the harm if the world does influence us as you tell us? Why should we not be preoccupied with that which we see? Why should we not gratify our desires with the created objects that do gratify them, and while and as we may?" My brethren, these questions would be very sensible if we could be sure, only sure, that man's existence ended at death. The real point is this: What sort of being is man? Is he only an animal whose spiritual nature is an illusive and phosphorescent accompaniment of his bodily functions, or is he an immortal spirit associated with a bodily frame on the existence of which his real and his deepest life is in no degree dependent? If the former, then no doubt the language which we read in the New Testament about the world is irrational fanaticism; but if the latter, then surely this language is but the common-sense of our human existence.

If man lives after death, lives for an eternity to which this life is no more than a petty antechamber, if man is made for God, can be satisfied lastingly only in God, and will find in God a happiness which transcends all speech, all thought, then surely any powerful influence which distracts man's eye from the true aim of his being, any series of objects which take possession of that little stock of desire that is meant for the eternal, does man himself a most serious injury. And this alienation of man from God is exactly what the world in all generations brings about, and this is the reason why the

Digitized by Google

Gospel speaks of it with such uniform severity. We shall see this more clearly if we briefly trace, from our Lord's time downwards, the successive phases which the world—that is, human nature estranged from God—presents in its opposition to true religion, and observe how faith has overcome it.

What then was the world of which our Lord Himself spoke as of something separate from, and hostile to, Himself and His disciples? Undoubtedly that world, practically speaking, was made up of the great majority of the Jewish people —the zealous Pharisees, the cultivated, cool-headed, sceptical Sadducees, the intriguing and merely political Herodians, the priests of the higher and the lower grades, the Scribes, the whole body of the officials attached to the Temple,—and it included too that world, the local Roman Government, with the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, at the head, and the officers of the depôt at Cesarea, and the great body of the civil and military officials. Of that world the great majority were Jews. They were attached, no doubt, to their ancestral religion, and that religion had come from God. But they had so lost sight of its true teaching and providential purpose that the things that should have been to them for a help were unto them an occasion of falling. Its observances instead of leading them to God kept them at a distance from Him; its promises of a Messiah, instead of opening upon their souls a bright spiritual future, only gratified a very vulgar form of political vanity.

No doubt there were many souls in that world and not of it, not far from the Kingdom of Heaven—Pagan centurions, as we know, who were capable of greater faith than any that was found in Israel, doctors of the law like Gamaliel, and Nicodemus, a Joseph of Arimathea, a Simon of Cyrene. But, as a whole, it was the world which hated the disciples, it was the world which hated Christ before it hated the disciples, it was the world which when the time came showed its blind enmity to truth as our Lord said it would show it. Whatever else it had it had not that true wisdom which sees the worthlessness of all that does not lead to God, that wisdom which none of the princes of this world knew; "for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," and accordingly, when it seemed to have crushed Him, He had already vanquished it. Within a few hours of His Passion, and with His eye already resting upon Calvary, rest-

Digitized by Google

ing upon the sepulchre, He exclaimed to His followers, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And then, secondly, this idea of the world, still external, was enlarged. In the age of the Apostles, and down to the fourth century of our era, the world meant, not merely the Jewish people, but the great mixed society of the Roman Empire with which the infant Church had come into contact through the preaching of the Apostles, and especially of St. Paul. If you had asked any Christian between the death of St. Stephen and the edict of Milan what "the world" meant, he would have replied: "The human beings in the Roman Empire who are outside the Church, and who are constantly engaged in persecuting it." That mighty society, in some respects the most imposing known to human history, with the Cæsar at its head, and its vast army of officials extended over the countries which lie between the Euphrates and the Straits of Gibraltar, between the Grampian Hills and the First Cataract of the Nile, though it had many other and finer aspects, which it is not now our business to consider, was indeed a wonderful and powerful embodiment of all that Scripture meant by "the world."

"Would you understand the world?"—a primitive Christian would have said—really did say—"then watch our Emperor marching to the Capitol with the kings of conquered nations in his train; then visit the gladiatorial shows in the amphitheatre which he patronises and for which he pays; or endeavour to get an estimate of the wealth which is poured into Rome every year from every quarter of the compass to be spent in a luxury and an ostentation which knows no bounds; aye, behold the Cæsar himself, who will probably, ere a few months have passed, be assassinated, but who for the time has been raised by adulation to a place among the gods, so that altars are built and incense is burnt in his honour. Mark those prætorian guards, who are in name his servants, but are in truth his masters, and whose fidelity depends on the money and the indulgences which they can wring out of him. And then scrutinise the countenances of the people, whose only cry day by day, month by month, year by year, is 'Bread and the public games!' Mark the crowd of philosophers, poets, parasites, men of renown, men of letters, statesmen, administrators, merchants, slaves, all of them engrossed entirely by the visible order of things around them, all of them

Digitized by Google

endeavouring to extract from it some satisfaction for the desire which should lead them up to God."

This was the world of which St. John was thinking when he wrote that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," and St. Peter when he dwelt on "the corruption that is in the world through lust." There were noble natures, generous and tender hearts, in that vast social fabric of the old heathendom, but taken as a whole it was the standing antagonist of the kingdom of God, and again and again it endeavoured to crush that kingdom out of existence by mere brute force. It is noteworthy that, generally speaking, the better emperors were the most active persecutors—Marcus Aurelius, Decius, Valerian, Diocletian—they, in fact, when persecuting Christianity, represented the very essential spirit of the world over which they ruled; and when they issued their edicts, and Christians were dragged before the tribunals and bidden to choose between some act of idolatry and a cruel death, there was in the vast majority of cases no hesitation; faith knew her plain business, she knew her high prerogatives, and, as the martyrs breathed forth their holy souls to God, they conquered a system which, in killing them, believed itself to be achieving victory.

And, once more, when tne Empire had adopted the profession of Christianity, and when, as it was said, the Cross had passed from the place of execution to the diadem of the Cæsars, the world, as previously understood, might have appeared to have ceased to exist. The fact was, it had only changed its character. It dropped its outward visible form, it was now a disembodied spirit. It became a subtle, impalpable, but not less real, enemy, too often pervading the very Church which had conquered it. It reproduced on sacred soil its two great characteristics: the devotion to the visible order of things, and the satisfaction of desire with created objects which had marked the old Pagan life. In Christendom, no doubt, the worldly spirit was held in check, was shamed into a sort of mock modesty by the creed and by the lives of sincere Christians, but it took its revenge for its defeat now and then on a conspicuous scale, and Christian monarchs and Christian leaders of opinion, and even great Christian ecclesiastics, showed how powerful was the spirit of the world to drug conscience and to drag life down almost to the level at which it had been lived in Pagan

Digitized by Google

days. And many earnest men thought to escape this encompassing danger by taking refuge in monasteries where a rule of life and absolute seclusion should shut out the world that ruled so largely in the Church outside. But they did not always succeed. A change of scene is not necessarily a change of temper, and there are instances of the worldly spirit within the cloister, when ambition, or the love of power, or the love of human praise, spoilt everything that was meant for God.

But here also faith had her triumphs. On the throne, as in that great and saintly man, Lewis of France; in the cloister, in many a St. Bernard or a Thomas à Kempis: in every line of life, there were men and women who rose above the seen to the unseen, who kept desire back from eager earthly gratification that it might find its complete satisfaction in God.

My brethren, wherever there has been a real revival of religion, the separateness of the true service of Christ from the world has been insisted on; the teaching of St. John's writings has resumed its rightful moral power.

So it was, to go no further back than the movement called "Evangelical," at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century; so it was with that other movement which in many respects contrasts with it, and which had its birth at Oxford fifty-seven years ago. It has been remarked that of late years this topic has fallen out of its old place, in Christian preaching, and as a consequence in Christian practice; and, if this be the case, it is important to ask ourselves why this is the case.

There are no doubt two reasons which make men more or less afraid of what the Bible tells us about the world. One is the dread which good men have of setting up for being better than they are, or better than others are, the dread of being hypocrites or Pharisees. They have known, perhaps, or they have heard of persons who have drawn a sharp line between themselves and worldly people, who have seemed to say, if they have not said, like some who were noted by the old prophet in a distant age, "Stand aside, for I am holier than thou." But of this there need be no fear if we follow the simple rule of applying what the Bible says on the subject, not to others, but to ourselves. Of others we may, we must, hope the best, but we have to see whether in our

Digitized by Google

thoughts, our motives, our conduct, our amusements, our standards of action, we ourselves are, or are not, falling under the censure which our Lord and His Apostles pronounced on the children of the world. For, most assuredly, the world is very near every one of us, in the lowest as well as in the highest stations of society, in the most serious as well as in the most secular occupations. The poor man has his world to conquer no less than the prince, the clergyman his no less truly than the layman.

The flavour of these several worlds may differ: the animating principle is always the same. The force by which they one and all can only be conquered is always faith. And the second motive for recent reticence about the world is a fear lest the duties of this present state of life should be neglected if we took the language of the Gospel too literally.

Depend upon it, brethren, that the true interests of man in this present state of being will really be advanced by his thinking much and very seriously of another. Human life is sweetened, it is braced, by motives which are drawn from a higher world. Simplicity, disinterestedness, care for others, indifference to personal gain or credit, make those who attain to them not only the children of their Father which is in Heaven, but also the salt of the earth, they save it from the moral decomposition which is ever and anon threatening to dissolve the great unwieldy mass of human society. Their toils, their tears, their prayers, arrest the merely selfish impulse of men around them, and they stay the impending judgments of God. Let us be very sure that the world at large owes more than it knows or thinks to those who, living in it, have the least share of its spirit.

> There are, in this loud stunning tide
> Of human care and crime,
> With whom the melodies abide
> Of th'everlasting chime;
> Who carry music in their heart
> Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,
> Plying their daily task with busier feet,
> Because their secret souls the holy strain repeat.

Assuredly, brethren, we cannot with impunity neglect this, or any other element, of God's revelation of His mind

Digitized by Google

and will. For us at this hour the world is just as practical a topic, just as serious an opponent, as it was in the days of the Apostles. It commonly presents itself to us at successive periods of life in different guises. It comes to us in early life as an attraction, I may almost say as a fascination. All the faculties of our minds and bodies are still fresh and on the alert; it toys with them one after another, addressing itself to the character of each of us with singular adroitness. Here it holds out the prospect of gratifying ambition, and there it discovers large opportunities of pleasure or amusement; and away yonder it veils what is really vicious or degraded beneath the conventional drapery which puts us off our guard, and in doing this it is so skilful and so persistent that we may easily forget what is due to that unseen Friend and Master Whose name we learnt in infancy from our mother, and Who, up till now, has always had a secret place in our heart. All looks so fair that it is difficult even to suspect the precipice that is near at hand, and on the brink of which we may find ourselves without a previous warning. In early life the world stands before us, as the smiling landlord at the door of his hotel meets the traveller, assuring us of a good entertainment and of a hearty welcome, and making no allusion to any less agreeable topic beyond; but in time the pleasantest visit comes to an end, and the bill must be paid.

The Bible is more frank at the outset. "Rejoice," it says, "young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes, but know that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." And then the world comes to us in middle life less as an attraction than as a tyranny. It brings with it a code of conduct, a body of maxims, which are often opposed to the precepts of the Gospel, but are nevertheless regarded as imperative. To stand on one's own rights, to resent injuries and insults, to make everything give way to getting on in life, to value others not by the real standard of character, but by the superficial standard of wealth or station, to make general acceptableness, and not truth, the rule of our opinions—these are some of its maxims. And it will not be trifled with. When it has once got us in its power, it keeps its eye on us. It reports any symptoms of disaffection, any lapse into high principle, with an implacable regularity; it keeps its votaries well under

Digitized by Google

the despotism of ridicule; it sneers down all generous enthusiasm the moment it shows itself; it makes men who desire better things ashamed of their duties, ashamed of their principles; it makes them not seldom insincere and false in their relations with others; it betrays them even into acts of inconsiderateness and of cruelty; it even penetrates into the sanctuary, and it bids the Christian kneeling there consider, not what befits God's presence as the Almighty and the Eternal, not what true and simple devotion would dictate, but what other people are thinking of him, and what will be said of him if he abandon himself to the better guidance of his conscience and his heart. And in later life it often happens that the world no longer attracts or tyrannizes over us from without, not because we have seen through it and bid it begone, but because it has taken possession of us and is now not without but within us. We only do not feel its power as an attractive or an oppressive force because we breathe it as an atmosphere, because, without our knowing it, we are already and altogether controlled by it.

At each of these stages faith is the victory that overcometh the world. As St. John's language implies, to possess real faith is to be already victorious. Faith matches the world's attractiveness in early life because it can offer a real, and much more powerful, attraction. There is more to fascinate the human soul in the eternal beauty than in any form or ideal of earthly mould, more to interest the mind and the affections in the contemplation of the love of God than in any earthly occupation, however pleasurable or engrossing. And faith overthrows the worldly spirit in middle life. It achieves this by opening and fixing the eye of the soul upon the one Being Who has a right to rule it because He is what He is, holy, just and good. As we see Him more clearly the world loses its power; its most cherished maxims are placed in the light of His countenance, and we see how little they can really do for the improvement and happiness either of ourselves or others.

And, once more, faith is equal to the hardest task of all, —that of expelling the worldly spirit when, like a London fog, it has penetrated into all the recesses of our spiritual home; for faith takes us by the hand, points us to a height from which, as from the outside gallery of this church above our heads on some winter day, it can look down upon the

Digitized by Google

mists in which life is buried below, and determine that it shall no longer be so. To see our Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, as He is seen by a Christian's faith is to have taken the world's measure, is to have parted company with it here and for ever.

Digitized by Google

THE CHRISTIAN'S MODEL

(Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, the 20th April, being the Second Sunday after Easter, 1890)

EPHESIANS IV. 15.

"That we may grow up unto Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ."

HERE is a statement of the object, or of one of the objects, for which the Church of Christ received her spiritual endowments from her ascended Lord. "He gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." His purpose, the Apostle tells us, was to bring Christians to moral and spiritual perfection,—"for the perfecting of the saints;" to advance the work for the sake of which the ministry had been instituted,—"for the work of the ministry"; to build up the fabric of the Christian life in the Church and in the soul,—"for the edifying of the body of Christ." A time should be looked forward to when in the unity of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God Christians would reach a perfection which is described as "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." That perfection would contrast sharply with the old Pagan life which had preceded it, when uncertainty and division had been the order of the day, when they had been as "children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." This new and higher life would be prompted by sincerity, governed by love, and its vital principle would be "to grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ."

So St. Paul wrote thirty years, or more than thirty years, after the Ascension; but the aspiration, the hope, the effort which he thus described would have taken at least some shape in Christian souls at a much earlier time, nay, we may be bold to say, immediately after the great events, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, even during those forty days which we are now traversing in memory. During those days our Lord

Digitized by Google

was still lingering on the earth; He was seen from time to time, by a few or by many of His faithful followers, but the old period of intimate and unbroken companionship, which had preceded the Crucifixion, had passed away.

Memory can sometimes interpret events more accurately than present experience. It sees them in their true proportion, as the traveller sees the higher Alps in their real grandeur, not from the valley at their feet, but from the distant plain. In those forty days the disciples of Christ would have understood the meaning of their Master's life better than when they were with Him day after day in the villages and fields of Galilee. And now that He was preparing for His triumphal departure they would have discerned with increasing clearness, as to-day's Collect says, that He had been given by the Eternal Father, not merely to die as a Sacrifice for sin, but also to live as an Ensample of Godly life, a Model of what human life should be. They would have anticipated St. Paul's desire to "grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ," and the prayer which we have offered to-day "that we may daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of His most holy life."

Now, the most obvious truths are often the most overlooked. They do not provoke opposition and the defence which opposition calls forth, and as a consequence they are apt to be less before the minds of men than other truths which are much more disputable. If this were not the case it would be unnecessary to observe that the first requisite for all good work is a good model. If a model does not exist, it must be projected by the artist before he touches his brush, or his chisel. He must have clearly placed before his mind's eye, and perhaps outlined in pencil, or shaped in clay, the conception to which he hopes to give a lasting embodiment. Not to have a model is to waste time, skill, temper, material, in efforts which have no promise of even moderate success, or of anything other or better than pathetic failure and confusion. Even the Almighty Artist when He made the worlds beheld the archetypal forms of things to which He was giving existence, traced out in His co-equal Wisdom, or Word, or Son. And no human workman, be he on a higher or a lower level in the school of production, can dispense with this first requisite—a model of that which he desires to achieve. When from this it is inferred that the moral or

Digitized by Google

spiritual artist needs a model no less than the architect or painter, or sculptor, it will perhaps be objected that moral or spiritual success is a matter not of workmanship so much as of growth. Each tree keeps close to the type of its species. The elm as it grows up has no model elm before it, and yet it does not wander away from its type into that of the oak, or the beech: it grows, and lives, and dies an elm, and this not in obedience to any outward model but by the spontaneous prompting from within and the law of its life.

And the Apostle in the very words before us speaks of the Christian life also as a growth, a comparison which at first sight might appear to do away with the need of an external model. No metaphor, my brethren, can be pressed with impunity to warrant any conclusions beyond its immediate purpose, and when St. Paul speaks of the Christian life as a growth, he does not forget that man is much more than a tree, that he is a being with a free, self-determining will. This will of man, both for good and evil, can very largely modify the growth, whether of natural character and propensities, or of spiritual powers and endowments within him. Undoubtedly the natural character which we inherit from our parents goes for a great deal.

Much is said in our day, and with a large measure of substantial truth, about heredity, the transmission of a type of body and mind and character from father to son, from one to another generation of a race; but this transmission is always subject to modifications on the part of the individual. Each separate will may mould into new varieties the type of life which has come down from the parent stock; and it is the sense of this liability to variation—possibly in a large number of cases for the worse—which makes each nation instinctively fix upon certain men who are held most perfectly to represent all that is best in it as models for the imitation of those who are just entering on their share in its life.

Every country in Europe, and England not less than others, has its representative men, its heroes, some of them numbered with the dead, some of them still tarrying among us, though their day of active labour may have passed; and as we direct the attention of boys and of young men to these great Englishmen, we say: "There, and there, and there, is a model which in your measure, in your circumstances, accord-

Digitized by Google

ing to your abilities, you should try to copy. Keep it before you, study the temper and the characteristics which it offers, and you will not disgrace the country which has produced it, the England which is also your own."

Indeed most of us do for ourselves practically feel the need of a model, and the natural thing for a well-disposed boy is to make a model of his father. His father, he assumes, is a sample of what a man should be, a model ready made and placed by God's providence in his way, so that he should have daily and hourly opportunities of studying it. A generous son will see nothing but what is good in his father, will admit no deficiencies in him if he can possibly help. Some forty years ago some friends were talking in the presence of John Keble, the poet, of the evils which pluralism—the holding by clergymen of more benefices than one at a time—had in bygone generations inflicted on the Church of England. "I don't know," observed Mr. Keble somewhat briskly, "my father was a pluralist, and he was not a bad sort of person," the fact being that the old clergyman had at one time in his life held two very small benefices at no great distance from each other. Certainly pluralism of that kind was no great harm. But what a serious consideration have we here for thoughtful parents; that a bad, or even a defective example on their part may do mischief in the exact ratio of the trustfulness and dutifulness of their children! Have we not lately had one terrible example of this brought home in the course of public justice to every one in the country, showing, on even a tragical scale, that where a home is not ruled by love, where a father's life presents nothing to his children that can win their affections or that can command their respect, deeds are possible which make ordinary murder seem by comparison tame and almost venial, deeds which even the heathen world would brand as the worst—since parricide most violently outrages the better feelings of unassisted human nature—that it is within the compass of human opportunity to achieve.

There is, indeed, a profound law of our nature which alone explains the immense importance of a pattern or model in life. Whether we will or not, we men do become like that which we admire. If our heroes should be men of ability, but not men of principle, more intent upon personal credit or success than upon the public advantage, more

Digitized by Google

anxious to outwit opposition than to secure the triumph of what is right and true, we shall insensibly but surely become like them too. And if they are men whose first idea is to promote, so far as they can, the reign of righteousness in themselves and among other men, amid whatever failures, and with whatever mistakes in detail, as to what righteousness may imply or mean, we shall become in our measure, but to our great and lasting gain, like them too. In this matter we may adapt, from another and a much more solemn connection, those words of the Apostle: "As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy, and as the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly."

A model, then, is a necessity in man's moral as well as in his artistic activities, and there are at least as many models as there are races of men, nations, callings in life, kinds of occupation. Is there any one model higher than these, supreme, archetypal, a model not for the men of one trade or art, but for the men of all, not for one age, or country, or race, but for all, a model not only for Englishmen, or Frenchmen, for Europeans, or Asiatics, for the men of the old, or of the modern world, but for all, a model for man as man, in gazing on whom, in admiring whom, in striving to imitate whom, man makes the very best he can of his manhood, gives scope and play to all in it that is highest and noblest, and carries it forward to those heights of excellence at which its real place in the universe, moral as well as material, is most clearly discerned? Yes, the Apostle says, there is such a Model, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the ideal Man. His excellence is dwarfed by none of the limitations which make all other models less than universal in their value. Although a Jew, He belongs plainly to all the races of the world, although a peasant He offers that which the greatest monarchs may do well to imitate, athough untrained in school or university, His majestic intelligence dwarfs down the wisdom of other men to the relative rank of crude guesses, or of scarcely disguised nonsense, although living in the world eighteen centuries and more ago, He is not less a Model for the men of our day than for the men of His own.

No one type of character, or temperament, has an unbalanced ascendency in that supreme humanity, because all are represented, and all are kept in their due place. With our finite capacities we can at the outside only imitate Him

Digitized by Google

piecemeal, and from generation to generation His servants have fixed, one on this and another on that feature of His human excellence in the process of doing so. "I," exclaims one, "will copy His humility"; and another, "I, His charity"; and another, "I, His patience"; and another, "I, His self-denial"; and another, "I, His tenderness with those who misunderstand Him"; and another, "I, His zeal for the Divine glory"; and another, "I, His compassion for the suffering." And thus the rays of moral beauty which centre in and proceed from the Sun of Righteousness are distributed among His servants in varying measures of excellence, but all of them look up to Him, all know and feel, and act upon, the truth that He is the one Standard of human perfection, all say with one voice, and in a never-ending chorus: "Let us if we may, let us if we can, grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ."

But beyond this there is another level of attainment to which the Model offered us in our Lord invites us—I mean the perfect balance which He holds between what may appear to us to be incompatible forms of excellence. Ordinary goodness among men, as we may often observe, constantly means the practice of one virtue at the cost of another. It seems incapable of keeping its eye upon the whole circle of excellences while endeavouring to excel in one particular. In the supreme type of goodness, there is no such one-sidedness or lack of balance as this. In Him no excellence is ever stunted down by pressure into imperfect virtue, or exaggerated by impulse into something that looks as though it were on the confines of vice. Thus, in our Lord, complete detachment from the ordinary interests and pleasures of the world was combined with an address and manner as far as possible removed from the ostentation of austerity, and His unrivalled dignity of character, based on, and inseparable from, His inevitable consciousness of greatness, did not check a perfectly simple and lowly bearing with every human being that approached Him. In Him there is no opposition between public duties and private attachments, no such compassion for the sinner as to involve the semblance of indifference to sin, no such strong feelings about men or events as to imperil for a moment His perfect self-possession, no such calmness under opposition as to shade off into moral or intellectual lukewarmness about the truth.

Digitized by Google

Illustrations might be extended, but in those which I suggest there is surely abundant material for our attention and our effort. The Apostle, beyond doubt, has a high ambition when he writes of Christians growing up to Christ in all things. He would have the lofty type of excellence, the great formative principles supplied by his Divine Master's example, appropriated by Christians in every department of public and private activity. Politics, literature, art should be Christian, no less than domestic life, and philanthropy, and worship. As the Supreme Pattern Christ has something to teach men in every district of human activity, and in every sphere of effort we are to aim at nothing less than growing up unto Him in all things which is the Head.

But here a difficulty may be interposed which we cannot put aside without consideration, because of late years it has been insisted on with ever-increasing pertinacity. We are reminded that, according to the creed of the Church of Christ, Christ our Lord is much more than man, that He is "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." "How," it is asked, "can we imitate such a Being as is here described, even though He is made Man and dwells on the earth in human form?" "We can imitate," it is urged, "a perfectly good man, who is merely a man, but if Christ is indeed so removed from us as the Church belief implies, imitation seems to be out of the question; the only possible attitude of the human soul towards such a Being must surely be that of wonder and adoration."

Undoubtedly, my brethren, the Divinity of our Lord is the central truth of the creed of the Christian Church, and before it can be even modified the whole Gospel of St. John, and no inconsiderable portion of the writings of St. Paul, must be cut out of our Bible. But does this faith destroy the value of our Lord's human life as a Model for our imitation? Those who say so appear to assume that imitation is only possible where the sphere of life, and the range of interests and opportunities, are strictly the same in the imitator and the model, and this assumption would disqualify, not merely our Lord, but many good men and women, for the office of an example to others. For instance, it is a matter of common remark that the Queen sets an example to her subjects of attention to domestic duties and of care for the suffering and

Digitized by Google

the distressed which we all of us might follow with very great advantage, and, considering how far-reaching is the influence of the throne in a society constituted such as ours, it is difficult to overrate the moral gain to the country of such an example. But supposing a person should object that the Queen lives in so totally different a sphere of life, that she has interests, occupations, an outlook so essentially unlike that of her subjects, that any real imitation of her in the particulars specified is out of the question. Would not the objection be felt to be irrational? We may indeed be unable to imitate the dealings of the sovereign with her ministers, with foreign powers, with questions of prerogative and the constitution: these things belong to an office with which she is, and we are not, entrusted, but she is not therefore beyond our imitation in the general principles of her conduct or in the sphere of duties which are common to her and to ourselves. And, although the comparison is even infinitely below the purpose with which it is made, although the greatest of earthly monarchs is as nothing, or less than nothing, before the majesty of the King of Kings, still the analogy holds good thus far, that the value of an example is not forfeited by the fact that the being who offers it is in certain respects beyond the reach of imitation.

Our Lord's true Divinity did not interfere with the truth of His manhood, or lessen—nay, surely in some respects it enhanced—the value of the example which He set us, from those early years of submission in the holy home at Nazareth to that solemn hour on the cross when He commended His Spirit to the Father. Indeed we may observe that excellence, like vice, is not a mere attribute of a living being: it is a thing in itself, no matter who offers an example of it. A lie is a lie, whether it is uttered by the fallen archangel in Eden or by a child of six years old in the nursery; and humility is humility whether it be practised by one of ourselves or by the Son of the Highest. Our Lord's eternal Person does not make the virtues which are so apparent in His earthly life inimitable by us, since they belong to that common nature which is ours by inheritance, and which in His mighty love and condescension He took upon Himself. Certainly we cannot heal the sick, or still the tempest, or raise the dead; we cannot assume towards our brethren a bearing which implies that in us they will find inexhaustible sources of strength

Digitized by Google

and consolation; we cannot die for the sins of the whole world and rise again the third day, and ascend to heaven, but we can each of us in his place and sphere, though it be at an infinite distance, grow up towards the love of which these deeds of power and compassion were the magnificent expression; we can share the mind, though we cannot reproduce all the works, of our Divine and glorified Redeemer.

There is, then, I submit, no real speculative difficulty which bars imitation of Him. But no doubt there are moral obstacles and motives which are wont to array themselves in intellectual finery, and with which we must grapple if we would not utterly fail. Self-love in all its forms is constantly holding us back from growing up to the standard of our Divine Head, and self-love must be conquered if we would see things as they are, if we would be as He would have us. In order to be practical let us fix our attention for a few minutes earnestly on one very prominent excellence in our Lord's human example, an excellence about which happily there is no room for controversy, and which, if difficult of imitation, is yet imitable by and incumbent upon every one of us—I mean His superiority to injuries.

Christians often cherish a spirit of retaliation and revenge, but they know that they are wrong in this, because, both by precept and example, Jesus Christ has told them so. But when our Lord appeared upon the earth the right and duty of revenge for injuries was almost universally recognised. A few philosophers timidly hinted that it might be a mistake, but no one had as yet taught men to realise their true greatness by showing kindness and attention to opponents and persecutors in imitation of the disinterested providence of the Father in Heaven. Our Lord's precept was, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you,"—and why? "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

And what He taught He practised, especially during His Passion, when no wrongs, no insults, could provoke Him to any act or word that was inconsistent with His universal charity, or that could check, or even chill, the prayer, "Father,

Digitized by Google

forgive them!" As St. Peter reminds us in the Epistle for to-day, "When He was reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." It has been thought that a special danger to Christians attaches to neglect of any human excellence that was especially conspicuous in our Lord's earthly life, and certainly the history of the Early Church offers, at least, one illustration of how much may depend upon the growing up to Jesus Christ in matters where there is no doubt whatever about the force of His example or about the possibility of imitating it. Some of you probably know something of the well-authenticated history of Sapricius.

After the issue of his second edict against the Christians by the Emperor Valerian in the year of our Lord 258, Sapricius, a Presbyter of Antioch, of high character, was arrested and brought in the course of justice before the imperial legate. The usual questions were asked and answered: "What is thy name?" "Sapricius." "Of what family art thou?" "I am a Christian!" "Art thou a priest or a layman?" "I am of the order of Presbyters." "Very well; know, then, that our august lords, the Emperors Valerian and Gallienus, have ordered that all who call themselves Christians should sacrifice to the immortal gods. If any despise this edict he is to be tortured and put to a cruel death." "We Christians," replied Sapricius, "we Christians have for our King Christ, Who is also God; He is the true God, Creator of Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein; the gods of the nation are evil spirits."

Sapricius was then put to the torture, and, when he had endured this with great patience, he was taken away to be beheaded. As he was on his way to execution a Christian, called Nicephorus, rushed forward and fell at his feet. Between him and Sapricius there had been a dispute over some trifle, followed by a coolness of long standing, and Nicephorus felt that he must win, if he could, forgiveness from, and reconciliation with, Sapricius while there was time. "Martyr of Christ!" he cried, "Martyr of Christ, forgive me, for I have wronged thee." Sapricius did not reply. A little further on Nicephorus repeated his request: Sapricius still took no notice of him. The pagans asked Nicephorus what he expected to get from a fool who was on his way to well-deserved punishment. But Nicephorus renewed his

Digitized by Google

prayer even when the place of execution had been reached, and still Sapricius was inexorable; he still maintained that persistent, that significant silence.

And then there ensued a scene which struck all the beholders with astonishment, which struck the Christians with awe. It seemed as if Sapricius, who had not flinched under the torture, was growing paler as he beheld the sword of the executioner. "Kneel down," said the lictors, "kneel down, Sapricius, that thou mayest be beheaded." "Why should I?" said Sapricius. "Because," said they, "thou hast refused to sacrifice to the gods; thou hast despised the edict of the august Emperors Valerian and Gallienus." "Do not strike me," cried the unhappy Sapricius, "I obey the Emperors, I will sacrifice."

Once more Nicephorus rushed forward, and this time it was to implore Sapricius not to forfeit the heavenly crown which was already well-nigh won by so much previous agony. But it was all in vain. "Then," said Nicephorus, "I will take his place; tell the legate there that I am a Christian," and he was forthwith taken at his word. That history sank deep into the heart of the ancient Church. The fall of Sapricius was quoted to show that the greatest of all sacrifices which a man can offer, the sacrifice of his life, is not accepted on high when it is offered by those who have not learned from Jesus Christ how to pardon injuries.

That attainment to the standard set before us by our Lord in His human life is wholly impossible without aid from God is a truth of which those persons will be most surely convinced who have endeavoured to achieve it. "Without Me ye can do nothing" is a word from Heaven that is ever sounding in our ears. Christ in you, *in* you, is the hope of glory, not only of heavenly glory after death, but also of the moral and spiritual glory which is possible for Christ's servants here on earth.

By His Spirit, by His Sacraments, our Lord takes up His abode in the soul and body of a Christian, and makes him what, left to his own natural resources, he never could be. If in the Church of Jesus Christ men have been, not merely moral, but also holy, not merely courageous, and faithful, and sober, but also humble and self-sacrificing and unworldly, this is because a higher force has taken possession of them and has made them what of themselves they could

Digitized by Google

not be. If you would grow up unto Christ, pray for a larger outpouring in your souls of His Holy Spirit, make frequent and devout use of His holy Sacraments and of other means of grace: and be quite sure that "what is impossible for man is possible with God." But as you grow remember that you are also free agents; keep your eye fixed on the great Model. "There is one thing," said John Bowdler, an excellent layman of the Church of England in the last generation—and he said it when he was on his death-bed—"There is one thing that I regret more than anything else in life, and that is that I have not always set before me every morning of my life some one saying or action of our Lord Jesus Christ for my guidance and imitation throughout the day."

Certain it is that, as time passes, whether we will or not, we are growing in some sense, "growing up" to something. Neither the soul nor the body of man is ever stationary. They say that within seven years the whole substance of man's body changes by the mere processes of exhaustion and nutrition, and who that watches what goes on in that more important part of his being, the soul, can be insensible to the changes, many and profound, that must surely come with the lapse of time? Neither feeling nor thought are ever stationary, growth and decay are always in progress, but the vital question is, what it is that is decaying, and what it is that grows. Is it what the Apostle calls epigrammatically "the old man" that is decaying, or is it the new? Is it "the new man created in Christ Jesus in righteousness and true holiness" who is growing, or is it the old? A vital question most assuredly for all of us, especially as life draws towards its close, and the day approaches when the result of all such growth and change will become fixed and unalterable.

Surely the time is short,
Endless the task and art
To brighten for the ethereal Court
A soiled earth-drudging heart.
But the dread proclaimer of that hour
Is pledged to thee in love as to thy foes in power.

Digitized by Google

CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY.

(Preached in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, the 27th April, being the third Sunday after Easter, 1890.)

ACTS x. 38.

"Who went about doing good."

THIS epigrammatic description of our Lord's earthly life occurs, as you will remember, in St. Peter's address to Cornelius and his friends at Cesarea, an address which, on account of its reference to the Resurrection, is used by the Church as the Epistle for Easter Monday. When we first hear it, such an account of our Lord's life on earth, if taken by itself and without the striking context, may appear to fall below the level of the subject, and to range Him on the same plane of excellence as has been attained in successive centuries by many of His disciples. We must many of us have known, probably many of us do know, men and women of whom St. Peter's words would be a just and unexaggerated description, men and women who, nearly or altogether, throughout life have gone about, still do go about, doing good to their fellow-creatures; and as we think of them we are perhaps at first inclined to wonder that the Apostle should have so expressed himself, expressed himself in such very measured terms when speaking of his and our Lord and Master.

Here, then, it is necessary to consider to whom St. Peter was addressing himself. Before him stood the centurion, Cornelius, probably a few comrades, and certainly some Jews, who, on an occasion like this, would not have had the largest place in the Apostle's thought. The persons of whom St. Peter was chiefly thinking were Cornelius and the other soldiers present—above all, Cornelius. The band to which Cornelius belonged consisted of Italian levies, and Cornelius, as his name shows, belonged to an old Roman family. And when St. Peter says that our Lord during His earthly life

Digitized by Google

"went about doing good," he knew perfectly well that such an account of that life would have appeared anything but tame, commonplace, inadequate, to those whom he was especially anxious to influence, because it was so sharply contrasted with anything that they had left behind them at home. For that great world in which Cornelius and his comrades had been reared must indeed have made the men and affairs of Palestine, generally speaking, seem by comparison petty enough—as we should say, provincial. Everything outward at Rome, the world's centre, was on a splendid scale. The public buildings, the temples, the baths, the public shows, everything connected with the army, everything connected with the machinery and the apparatus of government, was calculated to impress, and even to awe the imagination. But there was one overshadowing defect in that great world which would have come home with especial force to the minds of the class from which the rank and file of the Roman forces were chiefly recruited. It was a world without love. It was a world full of want and suffering, and the whole of the great social and political machine went round and round without taking any account of this. It was a world without love. Commenting on this fact nearly three centuries later, Lactantius, after describing the salient features of heathen life, adds: "Compassion and humanity are peculiar to the Christians."

It is easy to point to a few facts which may at first sight appear to traverse this severe judgment. Such are isolated acts of natural kindness provoked by some great calamity, as was shown for instance in Nero's reign by the heathen inhabitants of Rome after the killing or wounding of fifty thousand persons by the fall of the theatre at Fidenæ, or, some years later, by the general readiness to relieve distress when Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried by an eruption of Vesuvius. The beggars, too, who sat all day on the steps of the temples of ancient Rome, would never have sat there unless kind-hearted people had now and then tossed them a small coin. And liberality was celebrated in the speeches of great orators, in numerous inscriptions, even on the current coin of the empire, as a public virtue. Liberality, indeed, was a sort of virtue which had to be practised, whether he liked it or not, by every public man in Rome. From the Emperor downwards, every public man had to make over to the public, in

Digitized by Google

some shape or other, a certain part of his income, whether in gifts to his native city, or to the club or society to which he belonged, over and above gifts to his friends, guests, relatives. He must build a theatre, or build an aqueduct, or a fountain, or a temple; he must make a new road, he must repair the city walls, he must give corn, wine, oil, to be distributed among the citizens, he must erect public baths, he must endow a public library.

Of all these forms of liberality we have many and indisputable records, as well as of the presents to the people which each emperor used to give on succeeding to the throne, on the fifth, on the tenth year of his reign, on the occasions of a birth or a wedding in the imperial family, or of a public triumph. When, for instance, Julius Cæsar triumphed, the people were feasted in the streets at twenty-two thousand tables, and the costliest wines of Southern Italy and of the Greek Archipelago were said to have run in rivers.

Now, these isolated efforts to relieve suffering, these gifts to the needy, this liberality of the orators, and the inscriptions, these largesses to the people, these public works, these costly entertainments, as Cornelius and his friends knew well, were not the outcome of love. They were forms of an expenditure which was essentially selfish. The main object of such expenditure was to secure that sort of popularity which means political power. It was repaid, if not in kind, yet substantially. It has no more to do with charity, which loves its object for his own sake and not for the sake of what can be got out of him, than any other kind of outlay of capital with a view to a calculated return has to do with it. It was from first to last a matter of business, and as a consequence of this, so far was it, generally speaking, from doing good to the people who were its object, that it rapidly demoralised them by spreading among them habits of idleness and corruption. The Roman people, under the system of imperial largesses and entertainments, increasingly hated work. It cared only for such ease and enjoyment as it could wring out of its rulers. It became utterly indifferent to everything in its rulers except their capacity and willingness to gratify itself.

In order to do real good, the eye must rest not on what is prudent in, or what is expected of, the giver, but on what is needed in the recipient. And thus mere liberality, if active,

Digitized by Google

is blindfold; while charity seeks out its objects with discrimination and sympathy, liberality has no eye for the really sore places in the suffering and destitute world. Nothing was done systematically in that world with which Cornelius and his friends were familiar for classes or for individuals who could make no return. There was no sort of care for widows or for orphans. There were no hospitals—there was no public provision for those who were not citizens, and therefore had no influence. There was no consideration whatever—it is little enough to say this—for the immense class of slaves. Slaves were simply property to be bought and sold and punished, and, at one time, killed at the discretion of their masters. And if here and there were schools, like those under Severus, their main object, when we come to examine them closely, appears to have been to provide recruits for the Roman army. And all this was in harmony with principles laid down by the great teachers of the ancient world, such as Plato and Aristotle. In Plato's ideal state the poor have no place—beggars are expelled or left to die as injuring the common prosperity.

In Aristotle's account of the virtues, the most promising from a Christian point of view is generosity, but on examination generosity turns out to be a prudential mean between avarice and extravagance. The generous man, we are told, gives because it is a fine thing to give, not from a sense of duty, still less at the dictates of love for his fellow-creatures. It is no wonder that, when these were governing principles, there were few efforts in that old world, to which Cornelius had belonged, that deserved the name of doing good.

When then Cornelius heard from St. Peter of such a life as that of our Lord, and had further in all probability asked and received answers to the questions which St. Peter's description suggested, he would have listened to a narrative which had all the charm, all the freshness of a great surprise. Cornelius knew that in his own Italy the poor, and especially the sick and the hungry poor, were not simply of no account, they were looked upon as incumbrances on the national life. As they could be of no service to the State, either in the army or in the public works, there appeared to be no object in keeping them alive, and no effort was made to do so. This very class, it would have struck Cornelius, was the object of our Lord's particular attention. The hungry peasants whom

Digitized by Google

He fed on the shores of the Sea of Galilee were not like the comparatively well-to-do citizens who feasted at Cæsar's twenty-two thousand tables. Our Lord was observing His own rule: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maim, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." To have fallen among thieves, to have been wounded and left half dead, was itself a claim on The Good Samaritan, and He spent His ministry in acknowledging it. His practice was in conformity with that Divine precept: "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful."

Watch Him at work in or near Capernaum, as the Evangelist who on Friday was especially in the mind of the Church, and who was St. Peter's penman in describing his Divine Master's life, watched Him, as St. Mark describes Him in the first three chapters of his Gospel, beginning with the cure in the synagogue, then healing Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, then relieving a large number of persons who had gathered at sunset at the door of St. Peter's house, then, after prayer throughout the night, curing the leper, then on returning to Capernaum healing the paralytic who was let down through the house roof, then later on healing the man with the withered hand in the Capernaum synagogue on the Sabbath.

This is evidently a sample, an extract as we might say, from the diary of our Lord's occupations during His ministry, and Cornelius, when He came to inquire, would have been struck by the fact that, unlike the calculated liberality of the leading men at Rome, it did not win for Him any political or social capital. Those poor lepers, and paralytics, and fever-stricken peasants, could make no return to their Benefactor, and He did not ask for any. He was indeed sorry, for the men's own sake, when only one out of a company of ten lepers returned after being healed to give glory to God, but it was their loss, not His, that He deplored. His own rule was that which He enjoined on others: to ask for nothing again, to give alms and do kindnesses in such ways as might escape, if duty permitted it, a return in the way of honour, or reputation, or acknowledgment of any kind. And this, Cornelius would have observed, implied nothing short of a new ideal of life and work.

Digitized by Google

The Roman rule was to get as much service, pay, deference, as you could out of others, out of slaves, out of conquered nations, out of dependent classes, out of friends placed under obligations, and so on, and to represent yourself all the while as conferring some sort of favour in receiving it. "The kings of the Gentiles," said our Lord, speaking in a designedly general way, but with obvious reference to the Roman practice, "the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, but ye shall not be so." Here was a contrast. To render service was greater than to receive it, to give honour and respect greater than to appropriate it; it was more blessed to give than to receive. And why? "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and"—oh! the supreme expression of His love—"to give His life a ransom for many."

"He went about doing good." The highest and the greatest good which He did was done for the souls of men. To have done everything for man's bodily frame, and leave his spiritual being untouched, would have been a poor and worthless kind of doing good in the estimation of Jesus Christ. It would have been such a good as man would have needed, and would have been satisfied with, had he been only an animal with no assured destiny beyond the tomb, with no conscience within him, with no judgment awaiting him. The lessons by which our Lord brought men to know and to love the Father and Himself, the pardon which He won for them on the cross, the grace which He promised them after His Ascension, were His chiefest benefactions. But besides this He did abundant good in the physical, material, social sense. He relieved the pain of hunger, He enabled the poor and the suffering to fight the battle of life, as they could not have fought it without Him.

It has been said that Christ our Lord was the first Social Reformer. If by social reform be meant the doing away with all inequalities between classes, or even the removal from human life of the permanent cause of a great deal of physical suffering, it cannot be said that this description of Him is accurate. He showed no wish whatever, in any sort of way, to interfere with the existing structure of society. He insisted on Cæsar's claim to tribute—He prescribed obedience to Scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses' seat. He found a

Digitized by Google

great deal of distress in the world, and He left a great deal of distress; He found a great deal of poverty, and He left a great deal of poverty. He predicted: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." He announced: "The poor ye have always with you." His real work was to point to truths and to a life which made the endurance of poverty and distress for a short time here so easy as to be in the estimate of real disciples comparatively unimportant; but, at the same time, He relieved so much of it as would enable human beings to make a real step forward towards the true end of their existence. If our Lord was not, in the restricted modern sense, the first social reformer, He was undoubtedly, in the true and ample sense of the word, the first Philanthropist. He loved man as man—He loved not one part but the whole of man. He loved man as none had ever loved him before or since—He died for the being whom He loved so well.

And when our Lord had left the heart, the spirit of His work became that of the Christian Church. It too, after its measure, went about the world doing good. The New Testament guides us through the first stage of the subject. The seven deacons were ordained shortly after Pentecost in order to relieve the Apostles of the work of "serving tables," that is the administration of the public alms. The wealthier Churches of Greece were directed to lay by small offerings every Sunday, so that when the Apostle came by to fetch the collection the money might be ready for the poor Churches in Palestine. The poorer members of the Church were regularly supplied with food at the Agape, or love feast. Widows were especially provided for. Private Christians received orphans into their houses. The duty of hospitality, that is the entertainment of foreign Christians when travelling, is insisted on again and again in the Apostolic Epistles. Gaius is said, in St. John's third Epistle, to have dealt faithfully with the members of the Church and strangers, in contrast with Diotrephes, who neglected these duties. A bishop is required in this sense "to be given to hospitality," and the action of Christian charity is especially observable in the case of slaves. The Apostles made no effort to emancipate them. St. Paul advises the slave, instead of asking for freedom, to make good use of his condition as a slave, but the slave knows that he is our Lord's freeman, and the freeman

Digitized by Google

who is his master, if he be a Christian, knows himself to be Christ's slave. And thus Christian charity united the slave and the master, it united the Jewish and the Gentile Churches, it healed social sores, and it diffused material comfort as well as spiritual happiness.

It would be impossible here and now to notice the various activities of Christian work in the primitive times which followed the apostolic age. Early in the third century, if not in the second, there were houses for the reception of poor widows: orphans were brought up at the expense of the Church by the bishop or by some private person. Thus, for instance, after the martyrdom of Leonidas at Alexandria, his boy, who became the celebrated Origen, was brought up by a pious woman who lived in the city, and an excellent man, Severus, is named as having devoted himself in Palestine to the education of all children—they were a considerable number—whose parents were martyrs. In the middle of the third century the Roman empire was afflicted by a pestilence which, according to the historian, Gibbon, destroyed not less than half the population. It broke out at Carthage while St. Cyprian was still alive. There was a general panic; all the heathen that could do so fled, they avoided contact with infected persons, they left their own relations to die alone.

Corpses were lying unburied about the streets, and there were rogues who seized the opportunity of making horrible profits. Cyprian summoned the Christians to aid him in doing all that could be done. He was everywhere encouraging, advising, organising, helping the sick and dying with his own hands, and each man under him had, and knew that he had, his appointed task. Some of the Christians were anxious to confine their aid to their fellow-believers; their feelings against the heathen had been irritated by a recent persecution, and they knew that another persecution was impending; but they received no countenance fron their bishop. "If," exclaimed St. Cyprian, in a sermon preached at this crisis, "if we only do good to those who do good to us, what do we more than the heathen and the publicans? if we are the children of God, Who makes His sun to shine upon the good and the bad, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust, let us now prove it by our own acts, let us bless those who curse us, let us do good to those who persecute us."

Digitized by Google

One class of persons who were especial objects of primitive Christian charity were those who were sent to work in the mines. They were almost naked, they had the scantiest supply of food, they were often treated with great cruelty by the inspectors of public works. We find from the letters of St. Cyprian these poor people were special objects of his attention; he regularly sent them supplies by the hands of a trusted sub-deacon; and he wrote to them continually, assuring them of his sympathy and his prayers. And another work of mercy in which the primitive Church especially interested itself was the improvement of the condition of prisoners. The prisons in old Rome were crowded with persons of all descriptions—prisoners of war, especially after the barbarian inroads, prisoners for the non-payment of taxes and for debt—subjects on which the Roman law was very severe—prisoners for the various kinds of felony, and, when a persecution was going on, prisoners for the crime of being Christians. These unhappy people were huddled together, it is little to say, with no attention to the laws of health or to the decencies of life, and one of the earliest forms of Christian charity was to raise funds for the redemption of prisoners. Early writers like Ignatius of Antioch mention the liberation of prisoners by payment as a specially Christian form of mercy. Cyprian raised large sums from his flock to purchase freedom for prisoners of war.

It would be impossible within our limits to do any sort of justice to this vast subject—the manner in which the ancient Church of Christ carried on, both in the higher and the lower senses of the term, her Master's work of doing good. But the last-named particular, her care for prisoners, naturally leads us to think of a great man who died exactly a century ago, and who ought not to be unmentioned at some time during this current year from this pulpit, since his monument is a familiar object to all who visit and worship in St. Paul's. In the whole course of history few men have done so much to relieve human suffering as the reformer of prisons, John Howard. In this great task he was not first in the field, for in the first year of the last century the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge appointed a committee to inspect and report upon the London prisons, and the chairman of that committee, Dr. Bray, a man eminent for other good works, published an instructive essay on the subject of prison reform.

Digitized by Google

But these efforts did not, it must be confessed, succeed in influencing public opinion, until Howard in his own person regularly visited the prisons throughout the country, published accounts of what he witnessed, and left no means untried to bring about an improved condition of things. Howard's journals show that he was by no means an inequitable fanatic bent on drawing an uniformly gloomy picture. He makes the best of everything he can, as for instance of the kindness of a prison chaplain at Ipswich, but the general tenor of his accounts would appear to us at the present day quite incredible.

It is difficult to believe that such a dungeon as "The Chink" at Plymouth existed in the days of George III., and "The Chink" was only an extreme sample of the arrangements which were largely prevalent throughout the country. Howard penetrated everywhere, observed everything, recorded all that he observed, cross-questioned everybody—prisoners, jailors, magistrates. Everybody bent instinctively to the moral authority of his pure disinterestedness, and he gained increased authority by his resolute abstinence from any trace of exaggeration. All that bore upon health, upon morality, upon decency, upon self-respect, was carefuly recorded, and he left no means untried to promote improvements. After he had visited the country jails in England, he went through Scotland once and again with the same object; then through Ireland; then, in 1775, he began his great series of visits to the Continent. His practice of bestowing alms upon prisoners obtained for him at that time access to the country prisons in France. He endeavoured, but in vain, to explore the secrets of the Bastile. With this single purpose he visited Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland—especially Urselburg, Brunswick, Berlin, Bâle. At Vienna his plain-spokenness nearly got him into trouble at Court. Thence he made his way through Gratz, Lombardy, Trieste, and Venice, where he visited the cells under the leads and the dungeons below the water-level which the poetry of Samuel Rogers has made familiar to many of us, and then to Padua, Florence, Rome, Naples, and at a later date he explored—not seldom at the risk of his life, and, in those days of bad travelling, with extraordinary difficulty—Spain and Portugal, Poland and Russia—even Turkey and the Eastern Archipelago.

He died at Cherson, on the shores of the Black Sea, in

Digitized by Google

January, 1790, true to the last to the great purpose of his life, and he was buried with the service of the Church of England with every demonstration of respect and honour that the army and people of Russia could offer him. His monument was the first that was admitted to a place within this cathedral, and at the instance of Dr. Samuel Johnson. He had declined a public statue while living: his real monument is the record of his life. In the memorable words of Edmund Burke, "This gentleman visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces or the stateliness of temples, but to dive into the depths of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to take the gauge and dimensions of human misery, to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected."

There are two lessons which Howard teaches us more especially. The first: Howard was a philanthropist because he was a religious man. In the last century a great school of writers, especially in France, endeavoured to treat philanthropy as a virtue which has no connection with religion,—indeed, as a virtue which was an effective rival of religion, as being at once more practical and not encumbered by a supernatural creed. Howard, the greatest philanthropist of the century, gives no countenance to this idea. His Journals show him to have been a deeply religious man, who drew all the governing and guiding motives for his exertions from his religious convictions. The English Church cannot claim him as one of her sons; he belonged to a body of independent Dissenters at Bedford, and at one time he was powerfully attracted by the simplicity of life and by the active benevolence of the Quakers. But he always entertained friendly feelings towards the Church, and in his last hours he desired that her Burial Service might be read over his grave. We Churchmen can only wish that, being what he was, he had been one of ourselves, in one sense for his own sake, in another for our own. That he was profoundly influenced in all the actions of his life by the spirit and example of our Lord and Saviour, that he obeyed the will of Jesus Christ so far as he knew it with touching fidelity, is altogether beyond dispute.

Few men have had a better right to say "The love of Christ constraineth me," or have done more to convince the world, by the force of a splendid example, that philanthropy

Digitized by Google

is a flower that grows naturally on the tree of deep personal religious conviction.

And a second lesson which Howard's life teaches us is the importance of concentrating thought and strength on any good work which we are led to take in hand. Howard did so much, he was so widely influential, because he was what would be called, perhaps disparagingly, "a man of one idea" —the miseries of existing prison life not only in his own country but throughout the world. He knew that our human powers, whether of thought or of action, are after all very limited, and that, if any serious task has to be attempted, they must be used economically and made the best of.

Howard allowed nothing to interfere with his efforts to improve the condition of prisoners. He would decline invitations, sometimes he would not look at a newspaper, lest his mind should be diverted from the duties of that day with reference to the great object of his life. He was alive to, but he was impatient of, the charms of art and of scenery. He was desirous, and yet neglectful, of opportunities for recreation. When at Wilton he would not divert his attention from the jail at Salisbury in order to visit the great mansion of the Herberts. When in Rome he would not even allow himself the necessary time to inspect the splendid ruins which distinguish the capital of the ancient world. This rigid unity of purpose makes his journals somewhat monotonous, and, from a literary point of view, disappointing. "Prisons, prisons, prisons," is always the burden of his tale, but at the same time it shows the secret of his success under unparalleled difficulties. He revolutionised the opinion, not only of England, but of Europe, as to the treatment of criminals. In one of the hospitals at Rome he read with delight a famous sentence which proclaimed the principle which already lay nearest to his heart, the principle that it is a poor thing to visit the bad with punishment unless you can also do something to improve them by discipline.

That there is still much to be done in order to give full effect to the truth that punishment should be remedial as well as penal is true enough, but that the principle is now, not merely inscribed on the walls of a charitable institution, but generally recognised throughout the civilised world, is very largely indeed the work of Howard. If it should be thought that in some particulars Howard carried his concen-

Digitized by Google

tration of thought and effort to an extreme, there can be no doubt whatever that the absence of such concentration is one reason why in our day so many promising lives, so many bright thoughts, so many good resolves, lead to so little, lead to nothing. The temptations to dissipation of interest are greater now than they were a century ago. Facilities for travelling, the great multitude of books and newspapers brought within everybody's reach, and, it may be added, something in the temper of the time, all have the effect of leading the mind to pass rapidly, too rapidly, from one subject to another, and to give itself thoroughly to none. Some of us may have a greater breadth of interest, a wider outlook, more varied cultivation than had John Howard, but yet we may pass through life without doing a twentieth part of what he did for the good of man and for the glory of God.

No doubt he was in easy circumstances, without being wealthy, but what he had to give he gave with all his heart, he gave it to an object of immense importance. We may have more time and means, we may have less, than he had, but a young man or woman on the threshold of life cannot do better than consider what he or she can do that will glorify God and do good to man, and then, in old words, "turn all the desires of the heart that way." The most unshowing and unromantic methods of doing good may be the most acceptable. To work at a night-school, to keep the accounts of a charity, to get up Sunday breakfasts for poor people, may mean more in the eyes of the Infinite Mercy than to dispose of immense charitable resources, or even to be a great teacher or ruler in the Church. The vital condition of doing good, whether it be spiritual or physical good, is that simple unity of purpose which springs from disinterestedness, and this can best be learned at His blessed feet Who remains the first and the greatest of philanthropists, since in life and in death He gave Himself for us, that whether we wake or sleep we might live together with Him.

Digitized by Google

THE INSPIRATION OF SELECTION.

(Preached before the University at St. Mary's, Oxford, on Whitsun Day.)

ST. JOHN XVI. 14.

"He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you."

THIS is the heart of the promise which our Saviour made to His disciples, when, with the feelings of bewilderment and desolation that were natural at the time, they were gathered round Him in the supper-room. The day, they felt, was near when they would no longer see and hear, at any rate, as heretofore, the wise and gracious Friend Who had taught and was teaching them so much that was best worth knowing. And He did not directly combat or relieve the sad anticipation. Nay, He told them frankly that He was leaving them; that in a little while they would not see Him, because He was going to the Father. But His place, He said, would be taken by Another Who would not disappoint them; but Who would only arrive when He had Himself departed. "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." And what was this Envoy and Successor to achieve when He did come? He was, no doubt, to change the hearts and minds of those who were outside the sacred fold. He was to "convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." But He was also to do a yet greater service for the orphaned Church. "When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth Which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." . . . "He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." . . . . "He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore

Digitized by Google

said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

That this promise would be kept became clear to the Apostles on that solemn occasion, the anniversary of which the Church observes to-day. When the crucified and risen Lord had ascended into heaven there was an interval of hushed and awful expectation before the promised Comforter came down. And when He came, essential Spirit though He was, He condescendingly came in such guise that the senses of men should apprehend His approach. He came as a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind; His arrival was pourtrayed in tongues like as of fire, which rested upon the Apostles; it was followed by such sudden endowment of a band of Galilean peasants with a gift of speech in various dialects as to astonish a mixed multitude of men who represented almost every race and district between the Tiber and the Euphrates. These were but outward signs, marking the advent of a supernatural power: this was the birthday of the Church of Christ. As our Lord Jesus Christ Himself had been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, so the society, which was to perpetuate among men His mind and His life, sprang from a kindred union between the Eternal Spirit and a sample—sufficiently poor and unrepresentative it might have seemed, yet still a sample—of our common humanity; and thus the little community, hallowed and invigorated from on high, entered on the career which has already lasted for nearly nineteen centuries, and which will end only with the close of time.

I. We have to consider, first of all, that particular account of the work of the Holy Spirit which our Lord here sets before us—"He shall glorify Me." The prediction belongs to that class of His sayings which only admits of moral justification if the Speaker is indeed more than man. Natural modesty and good taste, not to speak of distinctively Christian virtues, would make such language impossible in the mouth of any honest and humble man who knew himself to be no more than man, and was conscious of the failure and weakness which in every merely human life must so largely outweigh any solid claims to glory or renown. And our Lord's words cannot be understood to foretell any gradual accumulation and wreathing of titles or doctrines round His person, by the devotional or speculative activity of a later

Digitized by Google

time, if, in fact, He had no exact right to that which they implied. No being, whether Divine or human, is really glorified by having anything ascribed to him which is not his. The Cæsars were not glorified; they were only made ridiculous, as the wiser of them saw, by official or popular apotheosis. In proportion to a man's perception of the truth of things and the directness and integrity of his moral nature is his dislike of any exaggerated praise. And when we give glory to God we do not and cannot add to that which already belongs to Him; we only make a place in our own hearts, and, it may be, in the hearts of others, for some more adequate apprehension than as yet exists of what He is and what is His due.

When, then, our Lord said that the Spirit of Truth would glorify Him He meant only that the Spirit of Truth would enable men to do justice to the real character of His life and person. And there were then, as generally, causes enough at work to make such assistance needful. There were the passions of powerful classes, which made up the great majority of His countrymen, and which were bent on nothing less than casting out His very name as evil. There was the ordinary decay of memory, which would in a few years overtake His most intimate companions. And there was the more perilous activity of fancy, which might substitute for the preservation and exhibition of facts the fictions, or at least the decorative embellishments, of theory or enthusiasm.

A great deal is said about the power and endurance of posthumous influence; but after all how little can a man generally reckon on it! It is, in ordinary human experience, out of a man's keeping; it takes its own course, or the course which events prescribe for it. It falls into the hands of some clever adventurer and is manipulated for his own purposes; or it is of a kind to discover unsuspected ingredients, any one of which in its exaggeration may give it a fatally false turn; or it is crowded out of its due place by more vigorous and self-asserting competitors for public favour; or it shows early symptoms of being in a decline, and presently dies of exhaustion. A posthumous influence! It is wedded to a philosophy like that of Socrates, which may presently break up into two or more contending schools of thought; or it is embodied in a political inheritance, like that of Alexander, which may be distributed among three or four successors,

Digitized by Google

whose jealous rivalries are fatal to its permanent integrity; or it is a literary or artistic tradition, which in the mere act of passing into other keeping is transformed or dissolved through contact with new and powerful minds. A posthumous influence! It must, alas! be made over to the care of others; whether they be foes or friends; whether children or disciples. The biography of a modern philosopher has taught us that friends may not always be its safest guardians; Marcus Aurelius lived long enough to discover what weight would be attached to his meditations when the Cæsar Commodus would alone represent the Antonines on the throne of the world; and history has again and again shown how disciples may pay compliments to a departed master, while they set aside his clearest and most emphatic instructions. And thus the Preacher might seem in one mood of his thought to express the sombre reality—"Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever: seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. . . . Yea! I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? . . . This also is vanity."*

That, therefore, which must strike us in the words of our Lord is His conscious superiority to the fate which may be commonly expected to befall the influence of a man's character or teaching after death. He had put His life and work into such sort of keeping that it would be unaffected by the varying moods of human minds and the incalculable contingencies of human circumstances. And how would the promised Guardian of Christ's glory set about His work?

First of all, by exerting a transforming, purifying, invigorating influence upon human characters.

No merely natural account can be given of the change which is observable in the Apostles between the eve of the Crucifixion and the morrow of Pentecost. The perplexed, doubting, timid, half-suspicious, gloomy peasants, who misunderstand their Master's words and shrink from His side in

* Eccles. ii. 15-19.

Digitized by Google

the hour of danger, have been transformed into men conscious of being the trustees of a supernatural creed, and more than willing—aye, joyful—at any moment to attest its truth with their lives. And in the great Apostle, whose experience was so different from that of the eleven, a profound transformation of character, as well as of purpose, is no less observable. As he preached the faith which once he destroyed men recognised, he says, a Higher Power that had wrought the change—"They glorified God in me." *

And in after years, as we know from the genuine Acts of the Martyrs, the Holy Spirit gave glory to the unseen Christ, by displaying again and again before the eyes of the heathen the courage, and patience, and meekness, and dignity of His suffering servants. Nor is it otherwise at the present day. There are lines, well known to some of you, which describe at least one actual, and probably a not uncommon, experience:—

"I saw thee once, and naught discerned
For stranger to admire:
A serious aspect, but it burned
With no unearthly fire.

"Again I saw, and I confessed
Thy speech was rare and high;
And yet it vexed my burdened heart,
And scared—I knew not why.

"I saw once more, and awestruck gazed
On face and form and air;
God's living glory round thee blazed,
A saint—a saint was there." †

And the glory of our Lord was further promoted when the Holy Spirit organised a visible body — the Christian Church. The Church was not an afterthought, founded by men, who, finding that they thought and felt alike, combined to form an association which could enable them the better to work together, and might secure weight and currency for their convictions. The Church already existed as a home of souls on the day of Pentecost. And for a believer to belong to it was a matter of necessity, not of propriety or choice.

* Gal. i. 24.
† *Lyr. Apost.*

Digitized by Google

And apart from its faith, its life, its perpetual, scarcely observed, but incessant and resistless expansion, nothing is more wonderful in the early ages than its coherence. It is less remarkable that the Church was not crushed to death by relentless persecutions than that she was not tempted to make terms with the pagan Syncretism which was especially in vogue for instance in the second and third quarters of the third century. From Elagabalus down to Aurelian a constant series of efforts were made to induce the Church to mingle her creed and life with one or another of the conglomerate forms of decaying paganism. So cleverly were the sacraments and rites of Christianity reproduced at one period by the priests of Mithra, that St. Augustine, referring to it, could, almost humorously, exclaim, "Mithra Christianus est." But it was all to no purpose. A few Gnostics might yield to the spell. The great Catholic body would have nothing to do with it, though refusal meant a renewal of persecution. The truth was that the business of the Church, informed by the Holy Spirit, was to uphold in undiminished lustre the unshared, unapproachable glory of the Redeemer; and her separate existence witnessed to it in the ratio of the dangers whether of violence or seduction to which she was exposed. The question how she still came to be there could only be answered in the minds of thoughtful men by reference to the unique person of her Lord. She was there to proclaim His glory.

For this witness of the Church was not that of a voiceless or inert body. She spoke through great saints and writers whose words commanded the attention of the world; she spoke through assemblies which, before the division of East and West, represented, either by delegation or by subsequent consent, the whole of the company to which the promise had been made in the supper-room. Can we fail to see the hand of Providence in this—that before the separations had taken place which suspended the action of the collective Church, every question had been asked and answered that could bear upon the personal glory of the Redeemer; from the truth of His Divinity down to the separate reality of His human will? In those days of eager speculation, and sincere, if not always instructed belief, there was, indeed, many a wave of unhallowed passion surging round the eternal truths at stake; but the informing, presiding, chastening Spirit rode the storm, and not many a thoughtful man, it may be supposed, who

Digitized by Google

begins by believing that Christ's words are true, can trace the action of the Church in the great Conciliar period without feeling himself in the presence of a Power, the law of Whose action is revealed in the promise—" He shall glorify Me."

Thirdly, and especially, the glorification of the ascended Christ was achieved by the creation of a new sacred literature: the Books of the Canon of the New Testament. The Church is indeed historically older than the New Testament; but the New Testament is the supreme work of the Holy Spirit when glorifying Christ in the Church. Pentecost had not long passed when a group of biographers and letter-writers appeared upon the scene of Christendom, each retaining whatever was characteristic and individual in expression and style, yet so controlled by a unifying and illuminating Power as to combine harmoniously in the setting forth many sides of a single truth. There were, indeed, among the first teachers of the Church minds so divergent by temper and genius, that had all, indeed, depended upon merely human influences, had there been no supernatural bond of unity, they would assuredly have parted into irreconcilable factions. As it is, nothing is more discernible than the controlling and modifying action of God the Holy Spirit in the New Testament writings.

St. Matthew and St. Luke enable us to observe how St. Mark and St. John are only recording differing aspects of a single life: the sermons and discourses reported in the Acts, and the First Epistle of St. Peter, discover the point of unity between the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians on the one side, and the Epistle of St. James on the other. The Eternal Spirit presides like the leader of a great choir over instruments and voices of the most various compass; and while each contributes something which no other can give, all are duly subordinated to a single Will, directed to a supreme end. Look through the Apostolic writings and say whether there be any one motive in them so constant or so powerful as the giving His due place and honour in the thoughts and lives of men to our Lord and Saviour. Each evangelist glorifies one aspect of His life; whether it be His fulfilment of prophecy, or His true humanity, or His redemptive mission and work, or His pre-existent and Personal Divinity. Each writer of Epistles, or each group of Epistles, sets forth some one truth which shall add to our apprehension of Him; whether it be His example of patience, as in St. Peter, or His

Digitized by Google

lessons of love, as in St. John, or His perfect law of liberty, as in St. James, or His Second Coming, or His justification of the sinner through faith in His blood, or the transcendent qualities and ordered structure of His mystical Body the Church, as in St. Paul. Whatever else may be divergent in the Apostolic writings, this is the note of their underlying unity of aim: everywhere we trace in them the fulfilment of the promise, "He shall glorify Me."

II. This leads us to consider the method employed by the promised Comforter: "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

Here let us remark that our Lord does not sanction any of those conceptions of the work of the Holy Spirit which treat it as something independent of His own. The Spirit is not the author of a new dispensation: He perpetuates, explains, expands the teaching and work of Jesus Christ: "He shall not speak of Himself," "He shall take of Mine." Therefore is He called, in the Apostolic writings, not only the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of Christ; since it is Christ's mind and teaching — aye, and Christ's renewed human nature, which He conveys to the souls of men.

(a) If then we examine the three great departments of the Holy Spirit's work in the inverse order to that followed just now let us observe, first, how He takes of the things of Christ and exhibits them to the Church in the New Testament writings. The first five books of the New Testament are biographical or historical. Popular language often assumes that inspiration must always create; but if this were true there could be no such thing as inspired history. If history be the faithful record of facts, the function of inspiration in history must be limited to the grouping of facts, to the assigning to certain facts a relative prominence, above all to the selection out of a large number of facts of those facts which illustrate a particular aspect of higher truth. Popular language is wont to speak disparagingly of the copyist or the reporter, but the inspiring Spirit did not by any means abhor the work of the reporter or copyist; His inspiration consisted often enough in guidance to select from a large field those materials which would best illustrate the truth He had in view, and to exhibit them in such wise as to secure this object most effectively.

This faculty of judicious selection is higher and rarer than

Digitized by Google

may be at first supposed. To select wisely out of an embarrassingly large assortment of facts and thoughts requires a combination of penetration and resolve, in order to perceive what is really worth preserving, and to resist the seductions of what is not. Without this gift one writer will bury his true purpose beneath a mass of ill-selected and undigested details; while another will not exhibit details sufficient to give his subject the body and outline which it demands. Sometimes books even of high excellence in other respects, and which have laid the world under such great obligations, as, for instance, the "Ecclesiastical History" of Eusebius, may give us reason to regret that their authors have not used more freely certain sources of knowledge which must have been before them, or that they have not touched some matters on which they are discursive with a lighter hand. They may have many merits; but they lack the inspiration of selection.

Now, contrast with this the work of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Gospels. The supernatural is always haunted by its counterfeit; but the Holy Spirit at once swept aside a mass of legends such as are handed down to us in a somewhat later shape by the New Testament apocryphal literature. Nay, more, He took only some of the true words and acts of Christ. Christians might well believe that no acts or words of the Son of God during His earthly life could have been without high import of some kind. But they were not all equally useful for the specific purposes of the several Evangelists. Each Gospel bears traces of being a selection from a larger assortment of materials; the last says expressly that "there are many other things which Jesus did," * and which the Evangelist had not recorded. Each writer having clearly before him that aspect of the life of Jesus which it was his task to illustrate—whether Messianic, or human, or redemptive, or Divine—traverses with this object the stores of his own memory, or the recitals and reports of other eye-witnesses, and records just so much as is needed for his purpose. Each fulfils the prediction—"He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

The same principle of selection, although it is differently applied, meets us in the Apostolic Epistles. A phrase of Jesus becomes in the hands of an Apostle the warrant of a

* St. John xxi. 25.

Digitized by Google

doctrine, which is thus seen to have been always latent in it. The title "Son of Man," for instance, reappears in St. Paul as the Second Adam, the ideal Representative of mankind, Whose work is placed in vivid contrast with that of the first father of our race. A word about "giving His life a ransom for many," or "My Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins," warrants St. Paul and St. John in teaching a propitiatory atonement which wins for sinners pardon and peace. A self-proclamation, not less observable in the Synoptists than in St. John, constantly repeated and so unlimited in its scope that, if it were not rendered necessary by the facts of the Speaker's consciousness, it would be fatal to those moral qualities which win the love and respect of men, issues in the great passages of St. Paul on the Divinity of Christ, which thus takes its place as the cardinal truth of the Christian creed. These are but samples of the manner in which the Spirit took of the words of Christ, and showed their full meaning to the Church in the Apostolic Letters.

Nor was this method of selection from and interpretation of existing materials a new procedure of the Spirit in the Apostolic age. He then did what He had done in ages before the Incarnation. As we say in the Creed, He spake by the Prophets; and the Prophets in the sense of the Creed are not only members of the particular order which was endowed with a supernatural faculty for interpreting the Divine will, whether at the passing moment or in the more or less remote future, but also the leading rulers, statemen, and historians who were intrusted with the guidance of the people of Revelation. And the records of their work, as the authors of the historical books tell us, were largely compiled out of documents already in existence. One historian borrows from another—nay, even one prophet from another; while the Spirit takes now and again from the conglomerate mass of early traditions or records those fragments which had on them the mint-mark of the Eternal Word, and shows them in a new and inspired combination to His ancient people.

And thus we are led to notice a feature common both to the Old and New Testaments—the startling presence of what may at first sight appear to be foreign elements in the Sacred Book. The early history of Genesis may suggest traditions which belonged to ancient pagan peoples living in the great

Digitized by Google

Mesopotamian plain; the original text of its early genealogies may lie buried, as a distinguished Oxford scholar has suggested,* at Kirjath Sepher, or elsewhere, in brick libraries as yet unexamined; the sacred utensils and buildings of Israel, though consecrated to the worship of the Alone Eternal, may have been shaped more or less upon Egyptian models; its later literature may betray affinities—however we explain them—with Persian forms of thought. Nay, the sacred tongue itself, which was selected to be the vehicle of that earlier Revelation, was not, as was once supposed, unique; it was spoken, like Greek, by neighbouring pagans as well, and, as in the Moabite Stone, it sometimes heralded the praise of pagan deities. These and such like facts have been pointed to as showing that the Jewish Revelation did not come from God in any but a merely naturalistic sense. What they really show is that the inspiration which dictated its worship and its sacred records was largely an inspiration of selection.

In like manner the New Testament presents us with facts supplementary to the Old Testament narrative, and often only derived from later Jewish traditions. Such are the prophecy of Enoch; the double call of Abraham from Ur, as from Haran; the hope that sustained Abraham in offering Isaac; the names of the Egyptian magicians; the motive of Moses for leaving the Court of Pharaoh, and Egypt; the exclamation of Moses at Sinai; the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert; the prayer of Elijah for rain.

Again, St. Paul employs rabbinical arguments and modes of exegesis; and he quotes heathen authors not to refute, but to endorse them.

In instances like these, too, the words are fulfilled. "He shall take of Mine." For the Speaker in the supper-room is none other than the Eternal Word Who is announced in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel. "His" are not only the sayings and acts of the incarnate Christ, but whatever is true in the earlier history and thought of our race. Inspired men, like Melchizedek and Balaam and Job, were discoverable beyond the fence of race with which the Divine Wisdom had guarded His earlier Revelation; and, indeed, in all ages, here and there, in the desert wastes of heathendom there are to be met with patches of spiritual beauty; flowers which alike by

* Professor Sayce.

Digitized by Google

creation and by culture are His, Who nevertheless ever had in the world only one garden for the human soul, and Who did make Israel His people and Jacob His inheritance, before in the last days He spoke by His Son.

One work of the Holy Spirit is to collect these outlying and—may I say it?—less regular creations of the Divine Mind; it is to disinter the gems that lie hidden beneath the accumulated soil of ages; it is to bring to a focus the rays of light scattered throughout heathendom, and to exhibit their place in the true Self-revelation of God.

For if the Holy Spirit thus selects materials from imperfect or false systems, He does not thereby sanction these systems as a whole, or even imply that those portions of them which He does not employ are after the Mind of God. The quotation from the book of Enoch does not prove that the whole of that composition is inspired. The traces of Egyptian influence in the Mosaic ritual and legislation do not imply wholesale approval of the Egyptian theology. The prologue of St. John does not commit the Apostle of Love to a general sanction of the speculations of Philo. Rabinnical arguments which may be found here and there in St. Paul's Epistles do not mean that all other reasonings current in the Rabbinical schools are valid or even legitimate. An adoption of the particular Jewish tradition about the rock that followed the Israelites in the desert does not commit the Apostle to an approval of all the legendary stories that were already current in the Israel of his day. To quote a line from Epimenides, or Aratus, or Menander did not imply that every fragment of these writers had the sanction of Apostolic authority. The inspiration of selection sanctions that which it selects, and nothing beyond.

(β) There is now unhappily little time for tracing the selective method of the Holy Spirit in the organisation and Creeds of the Church. Even if it could be shown that in the Apostolic age the presbyterate was certainly modelled upon Jewish and the Episcopate on Gentile precedents, this would not of itself affect the question of their necessity to the true form and life of the Christian society. But the selective action of the Spirit is especially observable in the Church's use of ancient philosophy. The varying phases of that attitude were determined by the capacity of this or that school to furnish materials that in a given set of circumstances would

Digitized by Google

assist the supreme work of the Spirit among men. In one century Platonism was distrusted, as a solvent dangerous to Christian belief; in another it was laid under contributions by Christian writers, and even furnished terminology to the Catholic creed. Early Fathers may ban Aristotle; yet he is subsequently preferred to Plato, as not venturing upon topics as to which nothing can be known certainly without a revelation. The Church is led to reject such a symbol as the Homoousian at one time for reasons which are perfectly compatible with her adoption of it at another. The subject is too large to be more than hinted at. In this field, too, the Spirit is constantly choosing whatever has really come from the Word and Wisdom of the Father and can be, at a given time and place, made serviceable to the interests of His people.

As we follow the Holy Spirit in this department of His work, we may venture without presumption to observe that His action is limited by His own attributes. He is the Spirit of Truth, not only because it is the truth which He teaches, but also because He Himself is true. Therefore He cannot contradict Himself. If, for instance, He really through the Sixth Council pronounced Honorius to be a heretic, He cannot in our day have pronounced Honorius by implication to be infallible. Nor can He take into His service literary fictions which trifle with the law and the sense of truth. If it could really be shown that the addresses ascribed to Moses in Deuteronomy were the composition of a writer of the age of Josiah, who desired to secure for later legal decisions or institutions the countenance of the great Lawgiver; or that speeches attributed to David in the Book of Chronicles were never uttered by the real David at all, but only represent the opinion of a sacerdotal scribe after the exile as to what David, if properly instructed, would or should have said; or that passages in Daniel which claim to be predictions of still future events are really a history of events which the writer had himself witnessed, and are thrown into a predictive form in order to invigorate national enthusiasm at a critical moment by the spectacle of the imaginary fulfilment of a fictitious prophecy; or that the discourses of our Lord reported by St. John are not the *ipsissima verba* of the same Son of Man Who speaks in the Synoptic Gospels, but only the

Digitized by Google

voice of some Christian of the second century, or earlier, whose thought had been steeped in the Platonised Judaism of Alexandria,—or, perhaps, of the Apostle of Love, who, however, could not distinguish clearly between his own and his Divine Master's words; or that the sermons of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Acts resemble each other too closely to have been really uttered by those Apostles, and only represent a literary effort to produce ecclesiastical harmony in the sub-Apostolic age; or that the pastoral Epistles of St. Paul, although expressly claiming to be his work, were in fact composed when the struggle with Gnosticism had obliged the Church to create a more elaborate organisation, and are largely due to an endeavour to procure for this organisation the sanction of the great Apostle's name:—if, I say, these and other such-like theories which might be mentioned could be shown to be based on fact, it surely would be shown at the same time that the Holy Spirit could not have inspired the writings in question. He is not responsible for speeches which cultivated pagans like Thucydides or Tacitus could naturally and without scruple put into the mouths of their heroes. Those great writers had no more the Divine law of truth upon their hearts and consciences than they had the Divine law of love or purity; and nothing depends upon the historical worth of those fictitious speeches of theirs beyond the degree and quality of literary entertainment which we at this day may or may not derive from them. It is quite otherwise when we pass within the sacred precincts of the canon of Scripture. If the Holy Spirit is in any degree concerned in the production of its contents we may at least be sure that language is not used in it to create a false impression, and that that which claims, on the face of it, to be history is not really fiction in an historical guise. The Book of Truth cannot belie either the laws of truth or the Spirit and Source of truth.

(γ) Once more, observe how the Holy Spirit gradually builds up or develops the Christian character. He takes of Christ's teaching and example and shows it in its attractive beauty to the Christian conscience. This work of His is always going forward in those who will. As we pass through life the Holy Spirit, while endowing us through sacramental channels with the new Humanity of the Re-

Digitized by Google

deemer, discovers to us more and more the splendour and import of His person and work. We have learnt, or think that we have learnt, something of truth, and we are suddenly startled at the deeper meanings of the Parable of the Sower. We have succeeded to an estate, or we have won academical honours, and we learn the import of the Parable of the Talents. Our thoughts have been led to dwell on the great problems of capital and labour, wealth and poverty, which are so prominent in the modern world, and we see a new significance in the history of Dives and Lazarus, and in the precept given to the rich young man. We have been brought up to measure the worth of men by some class or artificial prejudice, and the position assigned to the Good Samaritan, though we have read about his going down to Jericho all our lives, flashes at a certain moment upon our thoughts as an overwhelming discovery. We have come to suppose that spiritual liberty implies the rejection of all outward authority, and the Holy Spirit reminds us of the words about even the Scribes and Pharisees who sit in Moses' seat. We have wandered, it may be, from the path on which in earlier and happier years our feet had been set to go, and we find guidance and consolation as nowhere else in the story of the Prodigal Son. We are getting on in life, and mapping out, with ambitious confidence, a future which, God perhaps knows, will never be ours; and we are brought to our senses by the record of the man who would pull down his barns and build greater on the eve of the very night on which his soul was required of him. And all through life, and assuredly not less as life is drawing towards its close, the great doctrines of redemption and grace are brought home with new power and clearness to the hearts and consciences of those who will. These are lessons which may make Pentecost a perpetual reality, and bridge over the interval between the most prosaic of lives and companionship with that incomparable Life which was lived nineteen centuries ago on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

And our Lord's words furnish us with a decisive criterion of the exact worth of dominant influences around us, of currents of thought which, now and again, would sweep us imperiously along with them, of the temper of our own time, of the *Zeit-*

Digitized by Google

geist. It is natural to us to think that the days in which we live are wiser and better than any before, and that in throwing our thoughts without restraint into the main currents of the hour we are doing the best we can with our short span of life. And yet we might observe that many a past generation has cherished this notion of un absolute value attaching to the thought and temper of its day, while we, as we look back on it, with the aid of a larger experience, can see that it was the victim of an illusory enthusiasm. When we analyse the ingredients that go to make up the spirit of the time, of any one phase of time, and when we observe that, notwithstanding its stout assertions of a right to rule, it melts away before our very eyes like the fashions of a lady's dress, into shapes and moods which contradict, with equal self-confidence, its former self, we may hesitate before we listen to it as if it were a prophet, or make a fetish of it, as though it had within it a concealed divinity. The spirit of any generation may have, must have, in it some elements to recommend it; but assuredly it has also other and very different elements, and the question is whence do they come, and whither are they drifting? All that is moving, interesting, exciting in the world of ideas, in the successive conceptions of the meaning and purpose of life that flit across the mental sky, is not necessarily from, nor does it necessarily tend towards, the Source of good. The mere movement of the ages does not in itself imply a progress from lower to higher truth, from darkness to light; movement is possible in more directions than one. "Brethren," exclaims an Apostle to some of his flock, to whom every claimant for speculative sympathy seems to have been welcome, "brethren, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits whether they are of God. . . . . Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."

The test of the true worth of the spirit of our day—of the spirit which rules our own thoughts and lives—is the saying, "He shall glorify Me." All that wins for the Divine Redeemer more room in the thoughts and hearts of men; all that secures for Him the homage of obedient and disciplined wills; all that draws from the teachings of the past and the

Digitized by Google

examples of the present new motives for doing Him the honour which is His eternal due, may be safely presumed to come from a Source higher than any in this passing world, and to have in it the promise of lasting happiness and peace. And, for the rest—

" Sunt multa fucis illita
Quae luce purgentur Tuâ,
Tu vera Lux coelestium
Vultu sereno illumina."

Printed by the Blackfriars Printers, Limited, 8, Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google